

SUSSEX COUNTY OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE

MINUTES

JUNE 26, 2014

The meeting opened at 7:35 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 (7:37 p.m.)  
Wolfgang Gstatenbauer  
Donald Ploetner  
Wes Powers

MEMBERS EXCUSED: Glenn Schweizer, Vice Chairman

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

ALSO PRESENT: Richard Vohden, Freeholder Liaison

**MINUTES CORRECTION/APPROVAL:**

A motion was made by Donald Ploetner to approve the Minutes of January 23, 2014, as presented. The motion was seconded by Wolfgang Gstatenbauer. All were in favor, with an abstention from Louis Caruso. Motion carried.

**CORRESPONDENCE:**

A. NJ FARM BUREAU – OPEN SPACE FUNDING:

Autumn provided the Committee with a copy of the June 6, 2014 edition of “This Week in Farm Bureau.” There was an article regarding Senate Bill 84 which would establish a 4% tax on corporate business to fund the State’s Open Space programs. The Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee posted a bill that would dedicate corporate business tax revenues for open space, farmland and historic preservation. The committee approved the bill and forwarded it to the full Senate for a vote later this month.

B. TENNESSEE GAS PIPELINE APPELLATE DIVISION:

A Federal appellate court ruled that Tennessee Gas Pipeline did not appropriately follow environmental protection laws in approving a massive natural-gas pipeline crossing New Jersey. The U.S. District Court of Appeals for Washington, D.C., agreed with environmentalists’ objections to the way the 40-mile Northeast Upgrade project was approved without considering other expansive projects being approved at the time and sent it back to FERC for another review. The court said that the federal agency split the environmental review aspects of the project, and therefore, violated the National Environmental Policy Act.

C. SENATE BILL 1050:

Senate Bill 1050 extends the expiration date of a Dual Appraisal Process for the Green Acres program and Farmland Preservation program for five years. The special appraisal process applies in the Highlands Region. Autumn said she attended a SADC meeting this morning and they were not sure if the bill was going to pass. The bill expires on Monday and it has only gone through the Senate.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

A. UPDATE ON FRANCISCO FARM:

Autumn reported that the Francisco Farm officially closed in March and that there was a Ribbon Cutting Ceremony in May. Cliff Lundin attended the ceremony and he said that about 50-60 people attended. All of those in attendance were involved in the preservation of this property.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

A. DISCUSSION ON UPDATE OF OPEN SPACE PLAN:

Autumn said a few weeks ago she discussed the update of the Open Space Plan with Eric Snyder. The Plan will be updated in-house rather than by a consultant. Cliff said the Plan does need to be updated because the State looks for updates to town's Master Plans which have an Open Space element. However, the principles of the document remain strong. He suggested that Autumn start by looking at the proposal from Land Conservancy as to what they were going to do.

Autumn said Eric Snyder suggested that the updated Plan include a layout of what the County would like to preserve instead of the typical open space language. Because the County's plan is not up-to-date, we are not able to receive the full benefits of Green Acres grants, etc. Currently, our taxes are too low and we don't have a current plan. Donald Ploetner asked how often the plan needs to be updated to qualify for Green Acres funds. Autumn said typically it is every six years but for town's Master Plans, it was extended to ten years. Wolfgang Gstattenbauer said there was significant cost involved for the Consultant to update the plan and most of the Committee agreed it would be good for the plan to be updated in-house. Cliff suggested that either a sub-committee or the entire Committee work on it with her. Autumn said she has written Municipal Open Space Plans and is also capable of producing maps.

Cliff asked if the letters have gone out to the towns about Open Space applications. Autumn said this was also something she wanted to discuss with the Committee. She met with Bernie Re and Dennis McConnell on Tuesday to see how the whole process works. Last year Donna said the Open Space Committee did not have a funding round. Cliff said typically the Open Space Committee hears an application in concept in August and then there is a formal presentation in September. The Committee visits the sites before the formal presentation. The notice to the towns to submit applications goes out in June or July. Last year the notice went out but there were no applications submitted. Cliff said he spoke with Barbara Davis from the Land Conservancy and she thought that Lafayette Township planned to submit an application.

Autumn said there is about \$129,000.00 available for Open Space acquisitions. Lisa Chammings asked if the Nature Conservancy expressed an interest because she believes there is a 100-acre parcel in Stillwater that the Nature Conservancy is surveying. Autumn said that the Nature Conservancy has not contacted her. There was some discussion about the property in Stillwater. Autumn said she will send out notices to all of the towns and the non-profits.

Freeholder Liaison Rich Vohden said he thought it was a great idea for the Open Space Committee to update the Open Space Plan because they have a better understanding of it. Also, Autumn has a Planning background. Autumn apologized for not fully

introducing herself. She said she has a Bachelor's Degree in Public and Urban Affairs and Environmental Policy and Planning. Prior to this, she worked for a private planning consulting firm in Bergen County. They were municipal planners for various towns. They also did private work. She said she also kept in-house hours at a municipality. Freeholder Vohden said every time he is with Autumn, she impresses him more with her knowledge.

There was a brief discussion on preservation work being done at the municipal level.

**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 Donald Ploetner and carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.