

SUSSEX COUNTY OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE

MINUTES

OCTOBER 28, 2010

The meeting opened at 7:42 p.m. by Chairman Vohden 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: Richard Vohden, Chairman  
Ailish Hambel  
Cliff Lundin  
Glenn Schweizer  
Dennis Snyder

MEMBERS EXCUSED: None

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

ALSO PRESENT: None

**MINUTES CORRECTION/APPROVAL:**

Minutes of the July 22, 2010 and September 23, 2010 meetings were not available.

**CORRESPONDENCE:**

A. TROUT BROOK EXTENSION APPLICATION, STILLWATER, 10/12/10:

A letter was received from Stillwater Township regarding the 2008 award of \$250,000.00 toward the acquisition of Trout Brook Extension project on Partridge Road. The letter said that the landowners felt that the value of the property was not justified by the appraisals completed by the State of New Jersey. Stillwater Township withdrew the grant application.

Donna said that this withdrawal frees up \$250,000.00 of County dollars.

B. TRUST FOR PUBLIC LAND AGREEMENT, 10/14/10:

A signed Grant Agreement has been received for the Armstrong Bog project in Frankford Township.

C. PAULINSKILL RECREATION PROJECT WITHDRAWAL, ANDOVER TOWNSHIP, 10/26/10:

A letter was received from Andover Township advising that at their October 25 Township Committee meeting, action was taken to formally withdraw their application with the County of Sussex on the acquisition of the Lake Paulinskill Project. Disputes among the heirs of the Estate have delayed this project and it was the consensus of the governing body that holding the project in abeyance until such time the Court changes its position would be unfair to the County.

Donna said Andover's portion of the project was \$61,231.00 and \$122,000.00 from Lafayette.

D. LETTER TO B. RE RE: WITHDRAWALS, 10/27/10:

Donna said she sent a letter to Bernie Re, the County Treasurer, informing him of the applications that were withdrawn and that monies were freed up for Open Space. The Open Space Committee will take this into account when reviewing applications for the 2010 funding cycle and making recommendations to the Freeholder Board.

The three withdrawals free up \$433,231.00. It also frees up \$183,231.00 of Planning Incentive Grant monies.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

A. UPDATE ON CLOSINGS (MARX, GOLDMAN, TPL):

Donna provided the Committee with an updated copy of the Project Status Tracking sheet. All of the projects in the 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005 and 2006 funding round are complete. For 2007, all the vouchers have been signed for the Hopatcong Trails Greenway. She said it started out as \$775,000.00 and the Land Conservancy of New Jersey negotiated a bargain sale and it dropped the price to \$550,000.00. The County originally put in \$387,500.00 and \$137,500.00 from the Planning Incentive Grant. The State issued an incorrect voucher so the County has to put in \$250,000.00 of Highlands PIG, \$14,152.00 of PIG and \$285,848.00 of County dollars. The State will

reimburse the County \$67,348.00. After the State disburses the money, the closing will happen.

For 2008, the Goldman project in Frankford is ready to go. The deeds were sent out for signature. The last project that is still open is last year's Frankford Township's Trust for Public Land (Armstrong Bog.)

Donna said that in previous charts the Station Road parcel in Sparta reflected \$45,000.00 in PIG money. That is incorrect. Sparta closed it without going through the State requirements. The current chart shows the amount from the correct funding source.

**B. LAWLER, LAFAYETTE UPDATE:**

Bob Canace sent Donna an e-mail a few days ago regarding the Lawler project. He said that Green Acres is willing to participate with Lafayette Township on acquiring the property. The plan is for Lafayette to acquire about 26 acres of fields and the State the remainder. Green Acres is reviewing the appraisals Lafayette obtained and will advise Mr. Canace on the certified value. Mr. Canace said once he receives the information from Green Acres in writing, he should be able to modify the grant proposal, depending on the level of State participation. The State may be looking for some County funding on their end, but he hopes to reduce the overall request. He will keep Donna and the Committee informed.

Donna said that the Committee has to act on what it has before them. If they vote to recommend the Lawler project, there should be a caveat that the Committee will do so without having to come back before the Committee at another meeting if the request is lessened.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**A. APPROVAL AND RECOMMENDATION OF 2010 OPEN SPACE APPLICATIONS:**

There are three applications in the Open Space 2010 funding round: Lawler in Lafayette at 87.94 acres; Stanhill Conservation at 114.58 acres in Vernon and Schuler, 58.75 acres in Stillwater. Those three come to \$473,750.00, leaving a shortfall of \$40,519.00 which is money that is in this year's dedicated tax. There should not be an issue with funding all three projects. Donna said Planning Incentive Grant funds cannot be used with any of the projects.

The cost of acquisition for the Lawler property is \$825,000.00, with \$800,000.00 for the land and the soft costs are projected to be \$25,000.00. They are requesting \$280,000.00 from the County. A Green Acres Grant is being used for \$415,000.00 and municipal funds of \$131,000.00. The property was appraised with an estimated value being \$8,000.00 per acre on one appraisal. The other appraisal is still in progress. The landowner is a willing seller who approached the township and it was anticipated that a mutually agreeable price can be reached by mid September, contract signed by mid October and closing could occur by mid April. The price has not be agreed on yet. If the acreage changes, the Resolution will have to be modified.

The updated application for the Stanhill Conservation project shows the cost of acquisition to be \$575,000.00 for the land and \$20,000.00 for soft costs for a total of \$595,000.00. They are requesting \$143,750.00 from the County. There will be a \$143,750.00 match from Green Acres match and they will use municipal open space funds. There were some concerns over the future use of sewer lines, easements and the developability of the land.

Donna said that the Schuler project is broken down into the Sussex side and the Warren County side. They are requesting \$50,000.00, with \$410,000 for the cost of the land. TNC puts in Stewardship money of \$89,800.00 and the soft costs are \$23,360.00. A Green Acres Grant for \$125,000.00 is being used and other grants and donations of \$347,160.00. Donna added that this parcel is a key part of TNC's project area. It could close in two to three weeks, however, that will have to be delayed until after the Freeholder meeting.

**MOTION:**

A motion was made by Glen Schweizer that the Open Space Committee make a recommendation for funding these three projects with Vernon and Schuler without conditions and for the Lawler property, up to \$280,000.000, with the explanation that the State may be providing additional funds which may reduce the amount of County money necessary. The motion was seconded by Cliff Lundin. A roll call vote was taken, all were in favor.

Donna advised the Committee that she will not be available for the November meeting. Most of the Committee members said they will not be available as well. She suggested that she contact Chairman Vohden to see if the December 16<sup>th</sup> meeting was necessary. There was some discussion on possible candidates to fill the Committee vacancies.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

None

**ADJOURNMENT:**

All business having been completed, a motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Cliff Lundin. The motion was seconded by Ailish Hambel and carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.