

Minutes of the Open Space Committee

September 21, 2009

Mayor Weinstein called the meeting to order at 7:35 pm.

Present: Mayor Steven Weinstein, Councilmember Ed Trawinski, Acting Manager Joanne Kwasniewski, Superintendent of Recreation Jim Graff, Michael Hakim, Crystal Robbins, Joan Goldstein, Ira Frankel, Jack Susser, Heather Blecher, Wendy Dabney, Maureen Moriarty, and Kurt Peluso.

Absent: Peter Kortright and Ted King.

Minutes and Attendance:

A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes from the previous meeting.

Updates:

George Street – Manager Kwasniewski stated that the State reviewed the environmental surveys that were sent in. There should be no more obstacles to receiving the money, which is a reimbursement. This will be the first use of Green Acres money.

Naugle House – This is subject to Attorney/Client privilege. Mayor Weinstein stated that the Borough put in an application for money for the entire piece of property. The County is also interested in the Vander Beck property as well. The County has invited the Borough to make a presentation, with a tentative date of October 19. All the committee members will be invited, but Michael Hakim will be giving most of the presentation.

Michael Hakim stated that this is for the Bergen County Open Space Trust Fund. The Bergen County Open Space Trust Fund distributes the money that is collected through the Open Space Tax for the County. There is a lot of demand for a little amount of funds. However, as the Mayor stated, Fair Lawn was invited to submit the application. It is on the Open Space Inventory which is preapproved by Green Acres. Michael Hakim, Mayor Weinstein and Manager Kwasniewski are working on a plan for a passive community park. The only plan for the structure is for it to be restored. The rest of the park would be interconnected trails, a natural amphitheater, some passive sitting areas and the caretakers house in front would come down. The trails would also lead to the County Park so there is a direct pedestrian connection.

A few exhibits are being prepared for the County presentation. One exhibit is the proposed plan, photographs and the developer's plans. Michael Hakim stated that an obstacle that the Borough faces is that Fair Lawn will be going up against communities that have a willing seller which the Borough does not have yet. There is a chance that the Bergen County Open Space Trust Fund will be unable to fund this project this time, but the Borough should apply again next year, especially if there is a willing seller.

Councilmember Trawinski stated that the Council has authorized the Borough Attorney to start negotiations with the owner. The Borough has the matching funds for this project and funds for Daly Field. It is not a question for one or the other. \$90,000 is still available for the original purchase.

The incentive plan from the State is to explore more than one option at a time which the Borough is doing.

There is a tremendous amount of exotic invasion on the property including bamboo. If the Borough were to acquire this land there would be a lot of horticultural remediation. Manager Kwasniewski stated that the only reason that the Borough is able to apply for this funding is because of the historic structure on the property. The County will not fund any site with buildings on it. If the Borough does not indicate that the structures would come down, the County will not give Fair Lawn any money. The money is for open space only.

Michael Hakim stated that the County has different pots of money. The pot that the Borough is requesting money from is acquisition money for open space. Michael Hakim stated that the Borough has a limited amount of time in front of the committee. However, the committee does not discourage residents from sitting attending to show their support for an application.

Daly Field – This is subject to Attorney/Client privilege. The Council is waiting for a date from the State Historic Preservation Office.

There was an article in the paper today regarding flooding in Fair Lawn. A group of neighbors on Remington Road held a meeting a few years ago because they saw some action on Daly Field and the residents thought that development was starting. These residents have significant flooding problems. Manager Kwasniewski stated that there is a capital project for that area that is going out to bid later this year and the project will be completed over the winter.

Green Acres Bond Issue – Michael Hakim stated that this will be on the ballot this fall. It is no longer a \$600 million bond issue; it is now a \$400 million bond issue which was a compromise made because of the economy. It is being supported by the Democratic candidate and the Republican candidate. He urged them to vote for the bond issue since now is the time to be investing in open space.

A letter will be written from the Open Space Committee to the Community News and The Record encouraging residents to vote for the bond issue.

Public Comment: No public comment.

Next Meeting: The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, October 26, 2009

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 8:10 pm.