

Minutes of the Open Space Committee

March 24, 2008

Councilmember Trawinski called the meeting to order at 7:35 pm.

Present: Councilmember Trawinski, Manager Metzler, Superintendent of Recreation Graff, Crystal Robbins, Sharon Rendfrey, Joan Goldstein, Heather Blecher, Michael Hakim, Peter Weissberg and Ted King

Absent: Mayor Weinstein, Maureen Moriarty, Benny Salerno, Peter Kortright, Ira Frankel, Jack Susser and Wendy Dabney.

Minutes and Attendance:

The minutes from the March 3, 2008 meeting were approved and accepted.

It was suggested a part time employee be hired to take minutes at all meetings; however, it was explained that funding not only for this Committee but also for all Council Committee's had been cut from the budget. A volunteer from the committee will be asked to take minutes and the meeting will also be tape recorded.

Correspondence:

The State grant application for the artificial turf field was denied. Additional NJDEP open space funds were not approved for this year due, in large part to Fair Lawn having unexpended NJDEP open space funds. This was done in favor of towns that have projects underway, but were short of funds.

Mayor Weinstein sent a letter to Senator Gordon urging him to help Fair Lawn obtain funds for artificial turf. Everyone was encouraged to write a letter to Senator Gordon urging him to help us to find other ways to fund this project. He lives in Fair Lawn, so he is in a good position to help.

Due to State budget constraints, the pool of funds for Open Space acquisition will most likely shrink. The Borough Manager was told by the State that there is money in Fair Lawn's Open Space fund and the Borough needs to spend it in order to show progress and get more money. According to Michael Hakim \$450,000 has been authorized for Fair Lawn by the State. There is a clause in the approval to the effect that if there is no progress in spending that money, the State may pull it and Fair Lawn may lose it. The money should be spent before the State budget passes or it will be lost. However, environmental groups are expected to pressure Governor Corzine to keep the Green Acres budget intact.

Status of Potential Properties for Purchase:

George Street – In less than 30 days, we should have the property appraised and that can be submitted to Green Acres. In another community, they paid the average of the high and low

appraisal for a property. We can learn from this, but we do need a willing buyer and seller to make it happen.

Naugle House – The house now has a fence around it. The County grant for approximately \$92,000 cannot be used for repairs to the property, only for the acquisition. This is different information than we had received previously. We can no longer acquire the Naugle House for \$1 and then spend the County money to repair it.

The Borough will use Open Space funds to match the \$19,500 county grant for the architectural and engineering study.

The Council may be able to negotiate with the Naugle owner to help to do what is necessary to repair the property. Felice Koplick received a list of contractors, architects, etc., from the County and we are using one of them. Once Fair Lawn takes ownership, hopefully the County funds can be used.

The Naugle house application is before the Planning Board. A “Whispering Woods” hearing: that is a hearing on the tentative settlement with the owner of the Naugle house property is the next step. If it is approved the law suit will be settled. The Council needs to clarify where public comments belong for the Naugle house, in the Planning Board or in the Council; although it was explained that both would probably be appropriate.

2nd Street –The County Mitigation Plan was not submitted correctly. Emergency Management Coordinator Marks persevered and got FEMA to accept Fair Lawn’s mitigation plan despite the County Mitigation Plan not being submitted correctly. as Fair Lawn submitted the required paperwork. Only Wayne, Atlantic City and Fair Lawn have FEMA funds for mitigation projects.

The residents on 2nd Street still live there. There is a concern when the Passaic River reached 9.2’ because the house will flood.

Green Acres will help to match the ancillary costs of this project, such as the appraisers, environmental studies, etc. The Environmental Preliminary Assessment should be initiated now. There is nothing from Green Acres regarding the ROSI list. Michael Hakim will update it.

Route 208 Corridor Study – The committee expected someone to be at this meeting to discuss the study: however, no one showed up.

Some of the concerns regarding this site are pollution and open space, which was also raised by the Borough Planner.

The developer of the Kodak site, Garden Homes, is basing their plan on an unadopted plan/master plan update. The Master Plan is required to be updated once every six years; however, it can be updated more frequently. Columbia Bank doesn’t think that the Kodak site developer is in line with the 208 Corridor study. This is in the Planning Board’s hands right now as a possible amendment to the Master Plan. If the Planning Board adopts the Master Plan amendment the Council still has the final say and can adopt or not adopt implementing Ordinance changes. Ideally, the Planning Board and Borough Council should work together.

The portion of the property that is in Glen Rock has not been taken into consideration yet. Glen Rock has agreed to meet with the EDC. Garden Homes is a reaction to the H2M study, rather than taking the best results into account as the EDC and Planner recommended.

Michael Hakim disagrees with a traffic study not being needed because if this area won't support the traffic, why design it to have bottlenecks. It was felt that the Committee should have representation at the Planning Board to advocate for open space.

Public Comments:

Felice Koplick was confused about the Naugle house grant. She was advised that the application was for acquisition of the historic property. The Borough found out last week that the funds can only be used for the acquisition. If Fair Lawn only pays \$1 for the property, then the County wants its money back. The Council agreed to match funds for acquisition, so maybe the Council will use that funding for repair/stabilization. Another grant should be requested for repairs/stabilization. The Borough Manger will put this item on the Council work session.

Michael Roney asked for more clarification regarding the Naugle house grant. He also asked about the COAH and Landmark suit. It was explained that Fair Lawn has to prove that its Round 3 obligation can be fulfilled someplace other than Landmark. Fair Lawn's position is that the case should be sent back to COAH.

Howard Mark expressed concerned about the substantial increase in density with the Cluster housing ordinance. He also thinks that the Naugle house might be in a flood zone.

Larry Koplick stated that the Master Plan is important for Rational Open Space Preservation. The Master Plan should be abided by in Zoning to protect the town legally. Anyone can initiate the Master Plan, but the Planning Board must adopt it. The Planning Board is the place for us to watch and be vigilant. He felt that open space must be set aside in the 208 corridor.

Larry Koplick stated that the Fair Lawn Industrial Park was originally meant to be part of Radburn and it has an open feel and look. It is important to maintain a nice lawn, etc. It is not usually residential in an industrial park.

Next Meeting: The next meeting will be on Monday, April 28, 2008.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 pm.