

OPEN SPACE & AGRICULTURE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Regular Meeting Minutes
June 4, 2009

Call to Order

A regular meeting of the Open Space and Agriculture Advisory Committee was called to order at 8:39 P.M. Chairwoman Sandra McNicol called the meeting to order and read the following notice requirements.

NOTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

Adequate notice of this meeting was provided in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act and published in the Hunterdon County Democrat and the Courier News on January 15th, 2009, and by telefaxing a copy of the notice to the Star Ledger , and the Express Times on January 8, 2009. A copy of the notice was also posted in the Kingwood Township Municipal Building and Post Office on January 8, 2009.

In order to ensure full public participation in this meeting, all members of this committee or Board, and also members of the public are requested to speak only when recognized by the Chair so that there is no simultaneous discussion or over talk, and further, all persons are ,the Township. Your cooperation is appreciated.

ROLL CALL

Open Space Advisory Committee

**Present - James Burke
 Phil Lubitz
 Sandra McNicol
 Richard Dodds
 Lee Frank**

**Absent - John Mathieu
 Linda Pfingst Oesterwinter**

2.

Agriculture Advisory Committee

Present: Elaine Niemann
William Pandy
Cynthia Niciecki
Pete DeCosta

Absent: None

Following Roll Call the Committee members welcomed new member, Pete DeCosta to the Agriculture Advisory Committee.

Motion to approve the minutes of the May 7, 2009 Regular Meeting Minutes

It was moved by Phil Lubitz, seconded by Richard Dodds and carried to approve the minutes of the May 7, 2009 Regular meeting minutes for the Open Space and Agriculture Advisory Committees and place on file.

Roll Call Vote:	Aye	- Sandra McNicol, Lee Frank, Phil Lubitz, James Burke, Richard Dodds, Cindy Niciecki, William Pandy, Elaine Niemann
	Nay	- None
	Absent	- John Mathieu, Linda Pfingst Oesterwinter
	Abstain	- Pete DeCosta

CORRESPONDENCE

N/A

REPORTS

Pig Progress: Liz Schmid

The following is a Report for Farmland Preservation for the Month of June from Liz Schmid:

**Farmland Report
June 2009**

Augustine - closing has been set for June 16 !

3.

Crouse - County Counsel is working on the closing package for this farm.

Felix - Contracts have been sent to two appraisers. Hopefully the appraisals will come in soon so they can be sent to the State for a Certified value to present to the family.

State PIG Meeting - Liz reviewed the meeting she attended.

The State does not want to do any type of splitting up of preserved farms. Landowners must figure out what they want before applying for preservation. The only criteria that may be considered is if the division would increase the productivity, diversity or intensity of the farming operation. Also the farm must be very large to begin with (well over 100 acres).

Some of the specifics discussed -

Animals raised on a property and sold as pets are not considered farm production.

Christmas trees and nursery stock are farm production. Timber is not.

Riding arenas used for lessons or personal riding and barns used for boarding or personal equine use are lessons or personal riding and barns used for boarding or personal equine use are considered in tillable area (important if farm is close to 50% tillable threshold).

The State does not contribute toward areas of a farm which have a pre-existing easement, which precludes development or farming as a usage.

CADB - There was no CADB meeting in May.

The Faller farm is on the market.

The Cooley farm is going (or is on) the market. They want 8 million, but are willing to discuss preservation (HLTA is involved) Block 14 Lot 27 - 138 acres adjacent to Palopoli and Felix. We won't have sufficient funds for this and certainly not at the figure they want. The County is developing websites for farmlands etc. Please contact Kelly Thomas at kthomes@co.hunterdon.nj.us

4.

Attendees for Farmland Status Meetings/May

Chairwoman Sandra McNicol noted that Liz attended the Farmland Status Meeting of May 20, 2009.

OLD BUSINESS

Open Space Funds: Memo of Details

Chairwoman Sandra McNicol reviewed several memos that were handed out to the Committees. They discussed the Open Space Funds and the Hunterdon Land Trust Partnership update. The Committees also reviewed the attached document Jim Burke handed out which shows each property being purchased with Green Acres funds.

The following Memos are Attached:

To: Open Space Committee
From: Diane Laudenbach, CFO
Date: May 15, 2009
Re: Open Space Funds

At the request of J. Burke, please find the following info:

Banked with the County	\$ 32,136.43*
County Money for 15-18-2008 (Encumbered for BL 14, Lots 28.02 & 30)	\$ 104,049.62
2009 Tax for Open Space	\$ 211,472.40*
Balance in Open Space Trust	\$ 46,094.47*(as of 4/20/09)
Bond Ordinance-15-18-2008 (Encumbered for BL 14, Lots 28.02 & 30)	\$ 197,871.63
Bond Ordinance-14-23-2007	\$1,000,000.00
Bond Ordinance-15-12-2008	\$ 695,000.00
Resolution No. 2008-151 (Encumbered and/or Expended 14/21.03, 12/19,5/2,26/25,4/2)	\$ 535,000.00
Resolution No. 2009-46 (Block 33, Lot13-closing set 6/30/2009)	\$ 270,000.00
*Total Available Funds:	\$1,984,703.30
Annual Bond/Interest Payment	\$200,000.00 (estimated)

6.

The Committees reviewed the sheet provided by the Township's C.F.O. D. Laudenbach.

Sandra McNicol noted that the payments for the loans will come out of the Open Space Tax Funds. There will be no increase in taxes for these purchases.

There was a brief discussion on the Trstensky Property Block 24, Lots 13, 13, 10, 14.01 - 59 acres.

It was noted that Kingwood Township was asked to contribute \$222,039.50 towards the Palopoli property and \$105,000 towards the Trstensky property out of the Township's grant.

Sandra McNicol explained that the Open Space Advisory Committee and the Agriculture Advisory Committee would like to send a letter to the Township Committee asking them to approve a commitment of the amount of \$222,039.50 of Green Acres Funds towards the purchase of Block 12, Lot 31 for the Palopoli property.

Motion

It was moved by Richard Dodds, seconded by William Pandy to request to the Township Committee to approve the commitment of the amount of \$222,039.50 of Green Acres Funds towards the purchase of Block 12, Lot 31 for the Palopoli property.

There was a brief discussion on the motion and the funds that are available. It was noted that \$500,000 has been banked from the prior year, and the funds are now available to the Township to spend.

Roll Call Vote:	Aye	- Sandra McNicol, Lee Frank, James Burke, Richard Dodds, Cindy Niciecki, William Pandy, Elaine Niemann
	Nay	- None
	Absent	- John Mathieu, Linda Pfingst Oesterwinter
	Abstain	- Phil Lubitz, Pete DeCosta

Sandra McNicol explained that the Open Space Advisory Committee and the Agriculture Advisory Committee would like to send a letter to the Township Committee asking them to approve a commitment of the amount of \$126,000 of Township funds towards the purchase of Block 24, Lots 13, 13.10, and 14.01 for the Trstenky property.

7.

Motion

It was moved by Richard Dodds, seconded by James Burke to request to the Township Committee to approve the commitment of Township Funds in the amount of \$126,000 towards the purchase of Block 24, Lots 13, 13.10, and 14.01 for the Trstenky property.

There was a brief discussion. Mayor Elaine Niemann noted at this time she is not comfortable spending funds until she has spoken with C.F.O Diane Laudenbach. Deputy Mayor Burke explained that it will be recommended to the Township Committee as long as there are funds available.

Motion Amended:

It was moved by Richard Dodds, seconded by James Burke and carried the motion to request to the Township Committee to approve the commitment of the amount of \$126,000 of Township funds towards the purchase of Block 24, Lots 13, 13.10, and 14.01 for the Trstenky property, as long as there are funds available in the Township's budget.

Roll Call Vote:	Aye	- Sandra McNicol, Lee Frank, James Burke, Richard Dodds, Cindy Niciecki, William Pandy, Elaine Niemann
	Nay	- None
	Absent	- John Mathieu, Linda Pfingst Oesterwinter
	Abstain	- Phil Lubitz, Pete DeCosta

OLD BUSINESS

Preservation Signs

Sandra McNicol explained that Phil Lubitz had taken picture of other preservation signs in Bucks County. She noted that they really liked the way they were formatted. She explained several patterns for the signs and their prices. She also contacted the New Jersey Conservation Foundation to inquire about their signs. She noted that there is a sign from the NJCF on Route 519 coming up from Stockton NJ. These signs are produced by a company in New York, Boss Signs. She explained that these are made of aluminum .063 in size. She noted that for a 18 x 24 inch sign on aluminum in color, non-reflective the cost would be \$49.95.

8.

The reflecting sign would be a cost of \$50.00, a two sided would be \$58.95, and for reflective two sided it would be \$67.95. Sandra McNicol explained that the Township would have to supply the art. The Committee members all agreed they are a good price. She then explained the Hunterdon Land Trust signs would be on two 4x4 posts, which cost \$12.00 each. She explained they then make a frame work that would go around the sign to hold them together and fit into the post. She explained that Kingwood's goal is to install signs on Township preserved property's. They will state that the sign was preserved by the Township of Kingwood through Open Space Funds or Farmland Funds and the name of the farmer that preserved the land at the time.

Richard Dodds suggested that they come up with a draft sign and then make a decision. Sandra McNicol asked for all the members to keep an eye open for an e-mail from her and then everyone will be able to discuss the options.

Deer Program

Sandra McNicol reviewed a letter and program that John Mathieu had written up for the Environmental Commission. She explained the program to be a certified hunting program within the Township. She noted that there was a vote taken at the Environmental Comm. Mtg. to approve Jack Niciecki to be the coordinator of the program. He will be looking into the program further and keep everyone informed, by bringing solid information back to the Environmental Commission before any decisions are made. Sandra announced a meeting which will be held at the Hunterdon County Library on Wednesday, June 10th. This will be a meeting to provide information on deer and the garden.

NEW BUSINESS

Lockatong Preserve(Harms Property)

Richard Dodds reported that the Lockatong Wildlife Management Program met with the local Boy Scouts.

Mr. Dodds explained that he has a list of names of Scouts interested in scouting out a hike to make on the property. He explained that the amount of work on the trail will be very minimal.

9.

He noted that the trail will be a simple loop trail, approximately a mile and a half long. Several parents and Scouts volunteered to work on the project. Sandra McNicol explained where the property is located. She also stated that the property is managed by the New Jersey Fish and Wildlife. She explained that the property is down Route 519, below the Methodist Church in Kingwood Township and Delaware Township. Mr. Dodds explained that this property is 491 acres, which also includes the Delaware Township side of the property. Mr. Dodds reviewed the property on the G.I.S. map. He explained that there are no formal trails at this time. Sandra McNicol noted that she contacted the Girl Scouts and they would like to get involved with the trail project.

Announcement Handout for October 3rd, 2009 Hike

Sandra McNicol announced that there will be a hike at the Harms property scheduled to be on October 3, 2009. The hike will be run from 9:00am till 12:00noon.

Hunterdon County EC Roundtable - List of Local Farmers

Sandra McNicol read aloud the list. Elaine Niemann briefly reviewed a meeting she attended in Lambertville. She stated that the consumers must support the local farmers. Mrs. Niemann stated that it was a very interesting meeting.

Update on Preservation and Restoration of the Lockatong and Wickecheoke Creeks (Meeting of May 27th - Update)

Sandra McNicol noted that Todd Kratzer has been working on this project for a long time. She noted how it effects the Township's drainage and how each municipality should get involved to prevent the erosion from drain damage.

Public Comment - Privilege of the Floor

James Burke noted that September 19, 2009 is the Township's 13th Annual Community Day with fireworks.

Sandra McNicol announced a meeting the County is hosting on Sustainability on Tuesday, June 16, 2009 at 7:30am, which is open to the public.

10.

Sandra McNicol announced a reminder to all the Committee members that there will be no Open Space/Agriculture Advisory Committee meeting next month in the month of July.

Adjournment

It was moved by Mr. Burke, seconded by Mr. Dodds and carried the motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:25PM.

All voted Aye on Roll Call Vote.

Respectfully submitted,

**Cynthia L. Keller
Secretary**