

OPEN SPACE MEETING – February 12, 2024

Members Present: Messrs. Morytko, Sabatini, Duch, Bogardus; Mayor Rubenstein

Also present: Mr. Bonker, Lou Esposito, Peter Dlugos, County Commissioner Jack DeGroot, and Caitlin Phillips

Mr. Morytko called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Nomination and Election of Chair and Vicechair of OS Committee

Mr. Morytko reviewed the Committee's member status. Mr. Bonker said he has a year left on the Committee after reviewing the regulations. Since he is not a Council member, he would be moved to the public spot. Mr. Dlugos noted he is interested in joining the Committee, as is Mr. Esposito. Mr. Sabatini said to Mr. Bonker that his position was Council appointed. Mr. Bonker said it was a 3-year term for appointment, so he should continue through the term for the final year, just not as the Council representative. He noted he would like to be the Chair. Mayor Rubenstein said they will figure this out with the Council and report back.

OS Financial Status Report:

Reserve for OS- \$360,435.56 / Reserve for Debt Service- \$23,863.73

Mr. Sabatini said the principal is \$60,000 and the interest is \$2,400.

Approval of Minutes – December 11, 2023 Minutes

Mayor Rubenstein motioned to approve the minutes, seconded by Mr. Sabatini. All were in favor.

OLD BUSINESS

Township Park Updates

Mayor Rubenstein said a subcommittee was formed, including Messrs. Proctor and Gallagher from the Council, to keep the park project on progress. Mr. Sabatini said they're working on the Completely Inclusive Playground (CIP), which is a \$640,000 project. It meets the requirements, and they're hoping to get a grant for most of the funding. CO Johnson park improvements will be discussed on 02/20, where French and Parrello will present information on field #8. The grant for the playground was submitted Tuesday. They received around 200 responses from the survey to support the project.

2024 Sussex County Trails Grant (Involvement and Updates)

Mr. Sabatini said grants should focus on larger projects, possibly supplementing the COJ walking trail. They should prioritize projects from a funding cost perspective. Mr. Bonker told Mr. DeGroot they applied for a grant when the maximum amount was \$5,000. They worked on raising the maximum because if it stayed the same, the administrative costs to get the grant together were higher than the award amount. Now the grant is up to \$10,000, so it's good progress. Mr. DeGroot, the new liaison for the Committee, thanked them for the feedback.

NEW BUSINESS

2024 Goals

Mr. Morytko noted CO Johnson was a priority. Mayor Rubenstein said the focus is CO Johnson and the CIP, as well as the tennis courts at the municipal office, for which they are applying for a grant. Mr. Morytko added forestry work and the timber sale. Mr. Sabatini said there is a capital discussion in March; most of the funding for the park is through the Open Space Trust. Mr. Morytko asked where the Open Space Committee fits in with

projects. Mayor Rubenstein said he will discuss with the Council. Mr. Sabatini added discussing stewardship. They need to reconnect with the forester, who should come to the next meeting to give updates and suggestions. The Environmental Committee should partner with the Trails Committee to plan for existing trail development and maintenance. Mr. Esposito asked if there is a 10-year plan. Mr. Sabatini noted the OSRP on the website, which shows the capital projects. Mr. Esposito noted they should make a goal of finding funding for the 10-year plan projects. Mr. Dlugos added trail blazing and colors for the trails, and agreed about stewardship. He added that they're due for map updates, and suggested using apps. Mr. DeGroot said he looked at the OSRP and noted the Farmland Preservation Program. There is a more comprehensive assessment, and suggested the Committee consider farmland preservation as a goal.

MEMBER REPORTS

Mr. Bogardus said Recreation now has online registration for programs. Mr. Duch said the Environmental Committee is looking for funding opportunities and planning events for the town.

ADJOURN –Motion by Mr. Sabatini, second by Mr. Duch, to adjourn the meeting at 8:15p.m. All members in favor. Motioned carried.