

OPEN SPACE MEETING – June 10, 2024

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

Also present: Secretary Caitlin Phillips

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

OS Financial Status Report:

Reserve for OS- \$346,086.38 / Reserve for Debt Service- \$43,131.86

Mr. Morytko said they will finish the debt service this year. Mr. Sabatini said the Open Space tax reports are not posted yet.

Approval of Minutes – April 8 2024 Minutes

Mr. Dlugos motioned to approve the minutes, seconded by Mr. Duch. All in favor.

OLD BUSINESS

Township Park Updates

Mr. Sabatini said French and Parello attended a recent Council meeting to review the final scope for Field 8, and determined the cost would be an estimated \$1.8 million, which was challenged by a Council member, so no action was taken at the meeting. If the work is approved, it would go out for bid. Mr. Sabatini noted Mayor Rubenstein asked for the item to be carried, to look at the projects. There is no final scope for the C.O Johnson project yet.

They received a local recreation grant for the tennis courts at the municipal building. The work is estimated to cost \$306,000, and the grant was in the amount of \$65,000. The Council aims to use ARP funds to help with the project. Mr. Duch asked what the scope of the use for ARP funds is. Mr. Sabatini said there are no restrictions, but the Council wants to spend them on recreation. Mr. Dlugos asked what part is not moving forward. Mr. Sabatini said C.O Johnson Park has a lot of improvements, and the Council determined they wanted to focus on field 8.

NEW BUSINESS

Forest Management

Mr. Morytko said Heather will come to their August meeting. They've discussed the timber sale and forest stand improvements, as well as stewardship. They may do a site visit before the next meeting. He said they should discuss what their priorities are, to coordinate with Heather. They have looked at Cranberry Overlook and invasives at Tamarack. Mr. Dlugos said he looked at the Forest Management plan; Mr. Sabatini said this is something the Environmental Commission worked on. Mr. Duch asked about training for EC members. Mr. Sabatini said it's laid out in the plan, and there are state classes. He said Heather should review what was and wasn't done in the plan. Mr. Duch said she should look at new invasives that have come up since last time. Mr. Morytko said if anyone has other thoughts, they can forward them over and he will discuss with Heather. Mayor Rubenstein entered the meeting around this time.

Recommendation for Deer Hunting on Parcels

Mr. Dlugos asked if all standard rules apply to this hunting. Mr. Morytko said the seasons apply, and they require people to register. Mr. Sabatini said it's in the town code, and it's only bow hunting that's allowed. He noted he doesn't have any resources to manage this program, so it's self-managed. People have left stands in the

woods, and at the location at Tamarack, there were trees cut down on Township property. He recommended going back to what was proposed about 3 years ago for the parcels. This program was implemented to be a low impact way to manage deer populations, but doesn't know if it's been very effective. Mayor Rubenstein asked who hunts in a year. Mr. Sabatini said it's around 5-25 people who register, and the Clerk can provide the statistics, but not how often people hunt or for how long. Mr. Duch asked if buffers are set up on the trails. Mr. Sabatini said no, because then people couldn't hunt. With the setbacks of the structures, there would be no room. Mr. Morytko said they rely on people doing this responsibly.

Brian LoVerdi from the public said the permits provided say you can hunt Saturday and Sundays but the State says there is no hunting on Sundays, so the permit should be updated. He noted Cindy is good about making sure people get their reports in—you won't be able to get one for the year unless the previous year's report has been submitted. He noted he's felt an impact on having the Tamarack hunting area closed. Most people went to Cranberry Overlook, and agrees he sees tree stands on the trail, as well as off-leash dogs. He's advocating for opening Tamarack again for hunting. Deer are doing damage in the Forest Lakes area.

James Myers from the public asked about deer management in the Forest south area. Mr. Sabatini said Heather should be asked, but the property was found to be too narrow, and there are properties on both sides. He motioned to have the parcels listed from 3 years ago opened. Cranberry Overlook has gotten bigger—they can check the maps. Mr. Bogardus seconded this motion. All were in favor. Mr. Morytko said they can send this recommendation to the Council.

MEMBER REPORTS

Mr. Duch said for National Trails Day, the Environmental Commission did a trail building exercise. They discussed easements on properties; Mr. Dlugos suggested Tilcon. Mr. Sabatini said they should make sure they have the Council's support before doing anything. He recommended talking to CAD since they are coming to the Board soon. Mayor Rubenstein said they should talk to them before the meeting in July, but first look at the parcel maps and see where they'd like the project to be. He recommended it not be asked as an easement, but rather a long-term agreement.

Mr. Dlugos said the Environmental Commission didn't get the ANJEC grant for the town maps. They were told they could receive feedback on the grant application. Mr. Duch said they are planning to do a winter raptor presentation. Mr. Dlugos said they could walk the trails to map shapefiles. Mr. Sabatini suggested asking the Open Space to recommend the funds to the Council for the project. Mr. Duch noted they should get the grant feedback first. Mr. Dlugos said the Environmental Commission had a special meeting with the Musconetcong Water Association to discuss source pollution. They also discussed watersheds, and wanted to see if this is something he could bring up with the Open Space Committee. Mr. Sabatini said Lake Lackawanna Investment Company is doing work with catch basins because silt blocks the drains. There is also grant funding work going on for stormwater management. He noted they can reach out to Princeton Hydro for final comments, and can send the stormwater regulations to Mr. Dlugos, along with the website link for what's needed.

Mr. Duch asked if Board applications are available to be viewed. Mr. Morytko said they can, through the town, but are not posted online.

Mr. Morytko opened to the public and no one spoke, so he closed to the public. Mr. Sabatini said the committee should put together a budget plan for the groups they want to support and the potential expenses.

ADJOURN –Motion by Mr. Morytko, second by Mr. Duch, to adjourn the meeting at 8:30p.m. All members in favor. Motioned carried.