

OPEN SPACE MEETING – October 7 2024

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

Members Absent: Mayor Rubenstein, Mr. Esposito

Also present: Forester Heather Gracie, Secretary Caitlin Phillips

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

OS Financial Status Report:

Reserve for OS- \$347,234.50 / Reserve for Debt Service- \$18,068.14

Mr. Sabatini noted the numbers in the report need to be updated with recent work done.

Approval of Minutes – June 10 2024 Minutes

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

OLD BUSINESS

Forest Management

Ms. Gracie said Tamarack, Glenside, and Cranberry Overlook should be the focus for the proposed work. They should also focus on invasive species removal, and can monitor trails for hazardous trees. In discussing Glenside Trail, she suggested a bid and practice plan for a tree harvest and maintenance. Mr. Duch noted for Glenside, they'd anticipate less pushback because the work would make the trails more accessible. Ms. Gracie noted in the work being done, they could consider making a new trail in that area. Mr. Sabatini said they need to look into what the Council would need to do for this, and if the County would need to get involved since the work is near a County road. Ms. Gracie should clarify where the tree removal is taking place. There are properties nearby that are in the Lake Mohawk Reservation.

Mr. Dlugos noted they could look into barberry control. For that, they typically do controlled burns and dig the roots out. He is interested in adding invasive plant removal as a goal for 2025. He asked about the possibility of fencing. Ms. Gracie said fences require more maintenance and can be expensive. Mr. Dlugos asked about grants; Ms. Gracie wasn't sure if that covers that kind of work. Mr. Sabatini said hunters need to be educated about the deer hunting, and shouldn't be feeding them. Mr. Dlugos said the ordinance only talks about not feeding them on public property, so maybe that should be updated.

Ms. Gracie talked about the community forestry plan. Mr. Sabatini noted the maintenance of the plan falls on the administrative office. Mr. Morytko noted the invasive species removal is volunteer driven, and with Tamarack, there is a possibility of controlled burns. Ms. Gracie noted there should be no heavy equipment. Mr. Sabatini noted they should look at more hazardous trees in the area, as he wants a consistent policy. Ms. Gracie noted she'd like to have the garlic mustard removed by March.

Township Park Updates

Regarding C.O Johnson field 8, Mr. Sabatini said they received bids. Three were over one million dollars, three were under one million dollars—the lowest bid was deemed to be responsible, and was at \$567,000.

NEW BUSINESS

Budget Planning

Mr. Sabatini said they are looking at a tree removal project at the old school house. Mayor Rubenstein has been pushing for the tree removal and may speak to the JCP&L representative, as the trees are near the power source.

Open Space Minutes –October 7, 2024

Mr. Sabatini noted there is also an HVAC system that needs to be repaired, and they are looking to allocate Open Space funds. Mayor Rubenstein will work with Frank Gonzalez on this; they expect the repairs to be around \$1,000 to fix the unit. The Committee agreed in their support for this project. Mr. Dlugos asked about a lake management plan. Mr. Sabatini said it would be possible if the proximity was near Open Space parcels.

MEMBER REPORTS

Mr. Morytko and Ms. Phillips noted the Planning Board reviewed an application for Starbucks, and the Byram Car Wash is adding new vacuums and a new sign. Mr. Duch said the Environmental Commission is having a birds of prey event coming up. There was discussion about having a trails map generated. Mr. Sabatini suggested having an Open Space consultant, which would need a bid. Mr. Morytko said they should add this as a discussion topic in December.

OPEN TO PUBLIC

Patricia Moschella asked about using the Hudson Farms charity hike as a way to help with the money for the school house. Mr. Sabatini noted that is a Historical Society action that they could look into.

Mr. Duch asked about adding links to the agenda for supplemental documents.

ADJOURN –Motion by Mr. Sabatini, second by Mr. Dlugos, to adjourn the meeting at 9:30p.m. All members in favor. Motioned carried.