

**EAST AMWELL TOWNSHIP
FARMLAND AND OPEN SPACE PRESERVATION COMMITTEE MINUTES
JUNE 10, 2013**

Members Present:

Glorianne Robbi	Committee Chair
Dick Ginman	Vice Chair
Kat Cannelongo	Committee Member and Historic Preservation Liaison
Fred Gardner	Committee Member and Planning Board Liaison

Members Absent:

Pat Cregar	Committee Member and Mayor's Designee
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Alternates Present:

Peter Fick	Alternate 2 and Recreation Committee Liaison
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Alternates Absent:

Joan Sank	Alternate 1
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Liaisons Present:

Toni Robbi	Environmental Commission Liaison
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Liaisons Absent:

Kit Crisafulli	Agricultural Advisory Committee Liaison
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Others:

Terri Stahl	Clerk
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The Farmland and Open Space Preservation Committee meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m.

IN COMPLIANCE WITH the Open Public Meetings Act, this is a regular meeting pursuant to the meeting notice published in the January 31, 2013, issue of the Hunterdon County Democrat. On May 29, 2013, notice of this meeting was filed in the Township Clerk's Office, sent to the Hunterdon County Democrat, and the agenda was posted on the bulletin board.

Open to the Public: Motion by Mrs. Robbi, seconded by Mr. Gardner to open to the public; there being no members of the public present, motion by Mr. Gardner, seconded by Mrs. Robbi, and carried to close to the public.

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD May 13, 2013:

Motion by Mr. Fick, seconded by Mr. Ginman, and carried with one abstention, Mr. Gardner, to approve the minutes.

BILLS FOR APPROVAL:

Bills were approved on a motion by Mr. Gardner, seconded by Mr. Fick, and carried unanimously.

ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA – NONE

ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT WITH ACTIVE PROPERTIES UPDATE:

- Scibilia: Progress is being made, but an agreement on mowing requirements needs to be finalized; Stefanie Miller of SADC did a site visit last Thursday.
- Plimpton: The appraisal was sent to the estate, but values were not sufficient, and an agreement was not reached. The County had committed \$70,000 to the acquisition, but money could be shifted to another project. Jay Watson of D & R was involved in negotiations, and there were some comments exchanged about the estimated and actual appraisals.

Kat Cannelongo arrived at this time.

- Joan Sank spoke with a property owner on Wertsville Road about preservation, commenting on values on the Hay property, which are pretty close to his. The property has a lot of visibility on Wertsville Road.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Annual Report: Ms. Cannelongo finished the final draft of the language to accompany the annual farmland/open space map in the tax bill mailing. Mrs. Robbi noted that road names are now identified on the map. Mr. Ginman spoke about "a nice flowing description ...," and Ms. Cannelongo was thanked for her work.

NEW BUSINESS

Hunterdon County Funding Application: At a previous meeting, D & R shared a list of potential properties for possible preservation. The list will be used for the application to Hunterdon County, which is required by the end of June. The Township Committee will be asked to support the application at their meeting on Thursday night. Only three property owners from the original list have expressed interest, i.e., Pearson for two parcels, Helm, and possibly Sporman. An estimated value of \$160,000 per buildable lot was calculated by Jay Watson, and Mr. Ginman & Mrs. Robbi reviewed a recent realtor's list for comparison, with specifics discussed.

Mrs. Robbi spoke about the Co-operative Municipal-Nonprofit application process, including approval by the Hunterdon County Open Space Committee before proceeding to the Freeholders for action. She explained that the county would contribute 20%, D & R would provide 20%, Green Acres funds would be used for 50%, and the Township would owe 10%. Mr. Ginman mentioned that Green Acres may have money set aside for preservation in the Sourlands, which may or may not be considered. Mrs. Robbi spoke about the location of the properties in proximity to other County and State owned land.

Motion by Mr. Gardner, seconded by Mr. Fick, and carried unanimously to endorse the application.

Mr. Ginman presented a map he prepared of preserved area in the municipality, showing such sites as Cattail Brook, Clawson Park, Lang/Omick, Rambling Trails, Stony Brook Preserve, and South County Park; Cider Mill Road property will be added. Comments were exchanged, including the following highlights: 41% of the township is preserved; there is a Sourland Ecosystem being developed in the Sourland region and now extends through Hopewell; the Amwell Valley Trail Association also has easements, which are not shown, among other items.

FOSPC Administrator's Position: Mrs. Robbi spoke about a second interview for a candidate, which she and Mr. Ginman attended; she spoke favorably about the qualifications of the applicant. The position was publicly noticed and also sent to other municipalities and non-profits.

LIAISON REPORTS

Historic Preservation by Ms. Cannelongo: She was not at the last Historic Preservation meeting, but she mentioned recent and upcoming programs that Jim Davidson is doing on the Lindbergh case.

Planning Board by Mr. Gardner: East Amwell Township School recently provided information on a small addition to the rear of the office area to improve security for public access, and the Planning Board gave its endorsement. The Planning Board is also in the midst of Master Plan re-examination, which must be done every ten years. Mrs. Robbi and Mr. Ginman will be given a draft plan to review prior to adoption. Mr. Gardner spoke about ordinance application, e.g., clustering for open space, as the kind of information that may be reviewed.

Mr. Gardner also mentioned plans for a major horse facility on the former Weis property (Linvale Road), which may be going to CADB.

Agricultural Advisory Committee: No report.

Environmental Commission: Mr. Robbi commented on manning a table at the 4H Fair in August. He also mentioned on-going work on trails. Continued publicity for the ANJEC funding received for trails will take place at the fair.

Recreation Committee: Mr. Fick mentioned a good meeting regarding development of property in proximity to the County Fairgrounds in West Amwell; Freeholder Walton was present at that meeting. Another meeting is scheduled for June 17th, and Mr. Fick felt that "... it seems to be moving in the right direction." The East Amwell Township Recreation Committee finally held their reorganization meeting, and they will meet again the third week of June – Mrs. Stahl will confirm the date to make sure that there is no conflict with the County meeting. Recreation Committee member Thyra Zengel has been involved with the citizens' meetings and is familiar with plans and ideas for the creation of the new recreational land in West Amwell. Brief comments were exchanged about potential for development.

REPORTS

Meeting with D & R: Mr. Ginman reported on the 5/14 meeting noting that a lot across from the Meszaros property just sold, and adding to Cattail Brook is a goal.

SADC Meeting: Mrs. Robbi mentioned attending the 5/23 meeting and speaking with Stefanie Miller. Ms. Miller did meet with Block 3 Lot 5 owners, and progress is being made. Mrs. Robbi spoke about SADC involvement with decisions on activities on preserved land, referencing activities on a Montgomery Township equine property and side businesses being allowed. Some discussion took place on this item, with Ms. Cannelongo suggesting that SADC should issue guidance to owners of preserved land about permitted activities.

Mrs. Robbi spoke about pending legislation for early preservation property owners, i.e., A-4034, which would allow for rural non-agricultural, small scale enterprises, particularly for historic structures. Additionally, Mrs. Robbi reported that municipal comprehensive Farmland Preservation Plans approved by the SADC do not have to be re-examined at this time, as had originally been expected. She also noted that Tewksbury Township has opted out of continuing preservation efforts, and Monmouth County has a

policy of buffering preserved land with open space. Ms. Cannelongo provided anecdotal information about property she owned in Monmouth County.

Mrs. Robbi spoke about Green Acres funding still available, with the Township having \$104,000 left in their grant; she spoke about using it for the assemblage proposed earlier.

CORRESPONDENCE

The article by Michele Byers from NJ Conservation Foundation on farmland/solar was mentioned. There has been no further information about solar plans for the Stahl property since the application left the Planning Board. A seminar by D & R Greenway on conservation easements was noted.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CADB meeting is on June 13; SADC meeting is on June 27. The Planning Board will send a representative to the CADB meeting when New Market is on the agenda.

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

There was no one from the public present, so the meeting was not opened at this time.

NEXT MEETING

Mrs. Robbi spoke about the possibility of having the new FOSPC Administrator present at the July meeting and cancelling the August meeting.

The Township Committee will entertain a resolution of appreciation for Judy Conard at their next meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, motion by Mr. Gardner, seconded by Mrs. Robbi, and carried unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 8:45 p.m.

Teresa R. Stahl, RMC/CMC
Municipal Clerk