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**EAST AMWELL FARMLAND/OPEN SPACE PERSERVATION COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES: MARCH 11, 2019
MUNICIPAL BUILDING, 1070 ROUTE 202, RINGOES, NEW JERSEY**

CALL TO ORDER & OPEN PUBLIC MEETING NOTICE

Present:

Members: Richard Wolfe, Mayor's Designee
Erica Johanson, Vice Chair, via phone
Fred Gardner, Alternate II
Tom Jarick
Tom Rue – Recycling Liaison

Absent:

Peter Fick, Chair
Paul Sterchele – Historic Preservation Liaison

Others Present:

None

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m. by Administrator Fullerton. In compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act, it was noted that this is a regular meeting pursuant to the meeting notice published in the January 24, 2019 issue of the Hunterdon County Democrat. On February 28, 2019, 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

The meeting was open to the public for comments. A motion by Mr. Gardner and seconded by Ms. Johanson was made to close to the public. All in favor.

MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

A motion to approve the January 14 minutes and the February 11 minutes was made by Mr. Gardner and seconded by Mr. Wolfe. The minutes were approved.

BILLS FOR APPROVAL

A bill for \$1,636.64 for additional rocks at the Clawson House was discussed. Mayor Wolfe explained that the Clawson House will pay back this amount once they have funds from an alternate source.

ADDITION TO THE AGENDA

OLD BUSINESS

1. Property Management Plan for NJCF

Mike Van Clef has completed the online survey for NJCF regarding the Higgins, or the Preserve in the Sourlands, as NJCF is calling it. The survey will be sent out and posted on the Township website.

It was noted that there are two model airplane clubs within the area. It was suggested that these groups could be a good use, particularly since Mr. Higgins had flown planes there. It was also noted that it is important to get younger people out into open space so that the next generation can appreciate nature.

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2. Potential Preservation

It was noted that Tom Jarick has a contact with a neighbor of the Welisewicz farm. He will work on that contact. Ann del Campo is also working on reaching out to the farmers on the target list. The farm assessment forms are available at the Township if members need information for contacting property owners. Rick Wolfe is trying to get a number out of Thompson Realty for their property. It was noted that appraisal values have been coming in low recently, which may impact the willingness of Thompson Realty to be active on this property.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Thomas/Kanach application

Susan Kanach Thomas has begun an application to the SADC to preserve her farmland on Rainbow Hill Road. The application is ready to submit to the County and the State. She is requesting an exception area. The proposed exception area is shown on the map. Mr. Wolfe made a motion to submit the application to the State and County for preservation. Mr. Gardner seconded this motion and all were in favor. #

REPORTS:

Administrator's Report

The Open Space Trust Fund has spent \$2,733.26 so far. There was a \$1,600 bill for replacing the gravel at Clawson House, but otherwise it was the usual changes of utilities, trash service, and water testing at the parks. East Amwell Township received \$1,220.95 in interest as revenue for the Open Space Trust Fund. The FOSPC budget has decreased to \$500. So far the only charge to that has been the \$85 for my registration for the NJCF Rally.

The SADC is proposing changes to the Municipal PIG program rules. As part of that, they want more involvement from the Agriculture Advisory Committee. In fact, the form that Peter Fick had to sign for the Susan Thomas farmland application references the Agriculture Advisory Committee, which is the body that is supposed to be doing preservation. We will need to have a better relationship with Agriculture Advisory Committee going forward. We will also need to update the Farmland Preservation plan as per the proposed changes.

It was noted that Candice Wiggum has resigned from the Agriculture Advisory Committee.

The Property Management Agreement for Block 38 Lots 42 and 42.02 has been submitted to the March Township Committee meeting for their review and approval. Hopefully there will be no questions and the Township Committee will support this.

The Higgins subdivision application has been submitted to the Planning Board for the March 13 meeting. The Township Planner realizes the importance of completing this application easily. The Township has submitted a request for \$350,000 from Green Acres in order to assist with the preservation of the Wertsville Industries property. It was due to Green Acres by March 29.

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Recycling:

The Recycling Depot was this past weekend. There were no dumpsters at first, but 56 people showed up and the dumpsters ended up 70% full. The TREX program is going well. There is a revised charge for tires. There has been a continued discussion regarding recycling due to the lack of processing locations.

Township Committee:

Mayor Wolfe met with a representative of DEP who appreciated the new solar panel ordinance. She feels East Amwell is a model Township and wanted the Township to support other municipalities per solar panels. She also agreed with the Township Committee per the helistop. She is not sure she can do anything regarding this application, but she was going to reach out to DOT. She also felt that DEP should look at helistops in general and the ease of which they are granted and the appropriateness of their location.

The high-tension lines will be replaced. The current ones are 90 years old. The new towers are just a pole, so more land will be available for farming, once the towers are completed. It will take a year to install the new poles. Mayor Wolfe will contact the property owners of the farms impacted. He will also give a larger presentation on this at the Township Committee on Thursday.

Ms. Fullerton distributed an informational page on Open Space and Farmland preservation funding. Farmland preservation is mostly dependent on the SADC funding, while there are many options available for Open Space preservation.

CORRESPONDENCE

There was no correspondence.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no announcements.

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

There were no members of the public.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be April 8, 2019.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Wolfe made a motion which was seconded by Mr. Gardner to adjourn the meeting. All in favor. The meeting adjourned at 8:12pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Recording Secretary

_____ date _____

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