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**EAST AMWELL FARMLAND/OPEN SPACE PERSERVATION COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES: MARCH 12, 2018
MUNICIPAL BUILDING, 1070 ROUTE 202, RINGOES, NEW JERSEY**

CALL TO ORDER & OPEN PUBLIC MEETING NOTICE

Present:

Members: Erica Johanson, Vice Chair via phone
Richard Wolfe, Mayor's Designee, liaison Planning Board
Fred Gardner, alternate 2
Candice Wiggum, Liaison Agricultural Advisory Committee

Absent:

Pete Fick, Chair, liaison Recreation Committee
Joan Sank
Barbara Sageser, Liaison Historic Preservation Committee

Others Present:

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m. by Administrator Fullerton. In compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act, it was stated that this was a regular meeting held pursuant to the meeting notice published in the January 11, 2018 issue of the Hunterdon County Democrat. On March 1, 2018 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 Mr. Wolfe was made to close to the public. All in favor.

MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

A motion to approve the January 8 minutes was made by Mr. Gardner and seconded by Mr. Wolfe. The minutes were approved.

BILLS FOR APPROVAL

ADDITION TO THE AGENDA

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

There was no unfinished business.

OLD BUSINESS

1. Wertsville Industries Update

Due to the lack of quorum at the January County Open Space Advisory Committee, the Wertsville Industries application will be heard at the meeting next Monday, March 19 at 7pm for a vote. Mr. Gardner will attend this meeting.

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NEW BUSINESS

1. Review of Township Criteria for Ranking Farms in PIG Program

The Committee reviewed the Criteria for Ranking Farms for the PIG Program. This list of criteria comes from the Township Farmland Preservation Plan. FOSPC members were fine with retaining the criteria. The criteria come from the State and County requirements. It was noted that the County minimum acreage is 40, whereas in East Amwell it is 25 acres. If there is a property that is undersized for the County, East Amwell will need to use its PIG funding with SADC.

2. Review of Target Preservation List

The list of Target Properties for Preservation was reviewed. This list has changed in the last year, since some properties were preserved. It was also noted that two properties were removed since they are being included in the Affordable Housing Plan. The Committee discussed the opportunities for preservation with this list. Mr. Wolfe offered to approach some of the property owners on the Target list to discuss their preservation interest.

It was noted that different people respond to different reasons to preserve and benefits of preservation. Some property owners respond to price and economics, some people may respond to environmental concerns, while others may respond to succession/estate planning. Appropriate comps are needed to show the economic benefits to the property owners. It was also noted that in the past the Township bought properties and preserved them, in order to streamline the process. We need to confirm if the Township can do this, or if we need a conservation organization to do this transaction. It seems preservation is most successful if the process is made simple.

It was hoped that if we preserve more of the properties in the western side of the Township, more riding trails could be established. It was noted that riding trails enhance the value of the preserved properties.

There are three properties that have been added to the Target list, which are part of the proposed change to the County's Agricultural Development Area. As the Target list has been updated, Mr. Gardner moved to accept this revised list. Mr. Wolfe seconded the motion and the members were all in favor to accept the 2018 Target list.

3. PTO Color Run/Greenfest

It was reported that the Environmental Commission has decided to not try to do a Greenfest this year. Instead, they are planning on attending the PTO Color Run in the fall. It is anticipated that the PTO Color Run will be well attended. There was a question of what does "green" mean? It was noted that Green goes with East Amwell. It was suggested that there should be a larger promotion of the economics of renewable energy and the importance of stormwater runoff at Greenfest/the PTO Color Run.

Ms. Fullerton will follow up with Alison Castellano regarding including the Riverkeepers along with the two watersheds at the Greenfest/PTO Color Run.

REPORTS:

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Vice Chair's Report:

Erica Johanson reported on her experience at the NJCF Rally. She had a great experience with a session about reaching out and supporting all aspects of open space and preserved farmland. With the new Township website, we could promote the products produced by our local farmers, as well as the trails through the Township. The Township Facebook group was suggested as a method for creating this connection. It was noted that the Township Committee is creating a Webpage and Resident Communication Committee to revamp the Township webpage for three things 1) in order to let residents know, in real time, what the government is doing, 2) for emergencies – using texts as well, and 3) for Township events. It was suggested that the farmers and local business promotion could be added under the last item.

The topic of succession planning for farmers was discussed as well. SADC has trained staff to help farmers work on succession planning.

Administrator's Report

As it is March, not much has been spent out of the Open Space Trust Fund, just for maintenance of Clawson Park.

The Maresca Property has been greenlit for preservation. The SADC needs to set the CMV.

The County Meeting for Wertsville will be next Monday at 7pm. An email will go out about that tomorrow.

At the SADC Meeting of February 22 the Special Events on Preserved Wineries was discussed. It was noted that the pilot program was set to expire on March 1, 2018. There is no immediate legislation extending the program. It is also time for SADC to finalize the appropriations for municipalities. We need to set a date to meet with SADC staff and review the funding East Amwell needs for the next year. This will be reviewed and finalized this week.

At the County Open Space Meeting for Wertsville Industries in January, it was noted that there was a Township property adjacent to one of the parcels to be preserved. The status of that property was unknown. It turns out the property was donated to the Township for preservation in 2014. Rather than record a deed restriction, the property was supposed to have been put on the Green Acres ROSI, preserving it perpetually. This has been done now.

Agricultural Advisory Committee:

The Deer Management Symposium for March 2 was cancelled and rescheduled to March 20, 6-9pm. There should be a deer survey done by the end of the month. The State Fish and Game should be driving around slowly, counting eyes in fields and between trees. This number will be used to compare annually to gauge the deer population in the Township.

CORRESPONDENCE

All correspondence was reviewed during previous agenda items.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no announcements.

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

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The meeting was open to the public for comments. There was a motion by Mr. Gardner and seconded by Mr. Wolfe, to close to the public. All in favor.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be April 9, 2018.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Gardner made a motion which was seconded by Mr. Wolfe to adjourn the meeting. All in favor. The meeting adjourned at 8:55p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Recording Secretary
date _____