

**EAST AMWELL FARMLAND/OPEN SPACE PRESERVATION COMMITTEE**

**MEETING MINUTES: January 12, 2015**

**MUNICIPAL BUILDING, 1070 ROUTE 202, RINGOES, NEW JERSEY**

**CALL TO ORDER & OPEN PUBLIC MEETING NOTICE**

The meeting of the Farmland / Open Space Preservation Committee was called to order at 7:30 PM by Sande Katz, Administrator. In compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act, Ms. Katz stated that this is a Reorganization meeting pursuant to the meeting notice published in the January 29, 2015 issue of the Hunterdon County Democrat. Notice of this meeting was filed in the Township Clerk’s Office on January 24, 2015, sent to the Hunterdon County Democrat, and the agenda was posted on the municipal bulletin board.

2015	1/12	2/9	3/9	4/13	5/11	6/8	7/13	8/10	9/14	10/12	11/9	12/14
<b>Glorianne Robbi, Chair</b>	X											
<b>Kat Cannelongo, Vice Chair</b>	X											
<b>David Wang-Iverson, Mayor</b>												
<b>Fred Gardner (Member &amp; Planning Board liaison)</b>	X											
<b>Joan Sank</b>	X											
<b>Pete Fick (Alternate I &amp; Recreation liaison)</b>	X											
<b>Tim Martin (Alternate 2)</b>	X											
<b>Sande Katz, Administrator/Secretary</b>	X											

**REORGANIZATION MEETING**

Ms. Katz called for nominations for Chairperson. Mr. Gardner nominated Glorianne Robbi. No other nominations were made. She was elected unanimously. Chair Robbi took nominations for Vice Chairperson. Mr. Gardner nominated Kat Cannelongo. No other nominations were made. She was elected unanimously.

The second Monday of each month was set for future meetings; also voted unanimously, although Chair Robbi noted that meetings will be held on a decision-oriented basis.

### **OPEN TO THE PUBLIC**

Francis Gavigan was present. Motion was made to open the meeting to the public by Ms. Cannelongo, seconded by Ms. Sank. Ms. Gavigan asked how the public will be informed when future meetings are cancelled. Chair Robbi stated it will be posted on the website for the public, and Ms. Katz will send out a notice to the members. Ms. Gavigan had no further questions or issues. Mr. Gardner made a motion to close the meeting to the public and was seconded. The motion was unanimously approved.

### **PRESENTATION OF MEETING MINUTES**

Chair Robbi noted minutes of the last meeting on November 10, 2014 are available. Mr. Gardner moved to accept the minutes as submitted, seconded by Ms. Cannelongo. The motion was unanimously approved. Mr. Martin abstained.

### **BILLS FOR APPROVAL**

Chair Robbi noted that Secretary Sharon Brighthaupt had been paid for doing the November 2014 minutes. No other bills needed consideration.

### **ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA**

Chair Robbi recommended adding under New Business a discussion about holding and scheduling a Forum for Farmland Preservation.

### **REVIEW OF FOSPC RESPONSIBILITIES**

Chair Robbi reviewed the committee's responsibilities listed in Ordinance: East Amwell 5-8-2003 by Ord.No.03-07, 26-7. Powers and Duties of the Committee, A through I, noting the committee has been upholding its responsibilities as listed. Going forward, Chair Robbi asked the committee for recommendations for improvement with regard to responsibilities.

Chair Robbi requested that future discussions of contracts and negotiations be discussed in Executive Session.

## **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

### **Report on Active Properties**

**Blk 38, lot 3, Adjacent to the County Sourland Preserve on Rileyville Road (21 acres)** – Property is a subdivision of a house on a four acre lot and another subdivision of one acre lot to be sold to a neighbor for septic expansion, leaving 21 acres to be preserved. D&R and County engineers are involved. Chair Robbi commented that 50% of the grant money came from the County, and a request had been made to Green Acres for the remaining 50% paid upon closing.

**Blk 35 lot 18.01, Adjacent to D&R's Cattail Brook on South Hill Road (10 acres)** – A request for 50% funding has been sent to Green Acres and another request for 50% was sent to the County by FOSPC and D&R Greenways. The County approved a total of 40% matching funds, suggesting the township contribute some of the funds. Currently the property is in an estate and held up in court. A building and cell tower needs to be removed before moving forward. The property is of great interest because of its location next to D&R's preserved Cattail Brook.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

### **Farmland Preservation**

Scibilia, Blk 11, lot 37, John Ringo Road (40 acres). Closed 12/12/14

### **Open Space Preservation**

Ridge Road Assemblage: Pearson (20 acres), Sporman (3.7 acres), Helm (15.6 acres); totaling 40 acres. Closed 11/17/14

Mr. Gardner mentioned D&R Greenways published an exceptional article about the preservation of this assemblage. Chair Robbi gives much credit to Jay Watson from D&R Greenways for shepherding this project through to completion.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **Temporary Budget**

- Administrator/Secretary salary \$19/hour, estimate 6-8 hours per week
- NJCF Land Conservation Program (Trenton): Request needs to be made for the \$75 entrance fee. Valuable for Ms. Katz to attend to network with state, county, and non-profit representatives.

- Greenfest 2015

Chair Robbi suggested partnering with the Environmental Commission and changing the date from April to May when the weather may be warmer.

Ms. Cannelonga suggested using South County Park as a venue instead of East Amwell School. Ms. Katz will follow up.

#### Capital Budget: Funding for Farmland Preservation and Open Space Projects

- State Funding Review

- State Agriculture Development Committee (SADC)

Three years ago \$1.5 million was set aside for East Amwell by the SADC to provide for the State's 60% share of the certified market value of farms preserved through its Planning Incentive Grant program. Currently, \$937,696 remains after the preservation of four township farms. SADC is reviewing statewide its set aside funds because of the anticipated depletion this year of the NJ Preservation Trust Fund.

- Green Acres

Requests for 50% funding for the current Plimpton and East Jersey preservation projects in East Amwell have been submitted. Pierson, Helms and Sporman preservation projects in East Amwell were 50% funded by Green Acres. Chair Robbi noted the Sourland Mountains are a priority for the Green Acres Program.

- County Funding Review

- County Agriculture Development Board (CADB)

SADC set aside funds for farmland preservation.

- County Open Space Trust Fund

Township may apply for up to 30% of purchase price of open space projects. Non-profits may apply for up to 20% of same.

On annual basis, township may apply for 10% of what East Amwell property taxes contributed to the fund, for a County approved project.

- Township Funding Review
  - Open Space Trust Fund has obligations to pay off: bonds used for preservation projects, General Obligation Bonds, and Short Term Notes, therefore funds are limited.

## **LIAISON REPORTS**

**Planning Board** – Fred Gardner noted nothing to report that is germane to this committee.

**Recreation Committee.** Pete Fick reported having a successful Tree Lighting Ceremony at the Municipal Building. US Sports Institute attended their December meeting to discuss adding their playground programs to benefit the Recreation Committee, the US Sports Institute, and the participants.

**Agricultural Advisory Committee.** No representative appointed yet.

**Environmental Commission.** No representative appointed yet.

**Historic Preservation Committee.** No representative appointed yet.

## **CORRESPONDANCE**

Chair Robbi and David Wang-Iverson attended the last CADB staff meeting, where they were given a copy of, “An Act concerning special occasion events conducted at wineries on preserved farmland...” that explains regulations and restrictions that landowner need to follow. Deviations from these restrictions are a concern for the SADC.

Mr. Gardner mentioned the taxes on preserved land are lower than that on unpreserved farmland, which suggests a rationale for regulations.

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The next FOSPC meeting may be cancelled if no decisions need to be made. Instead, the proposed Forum that is under development will be the main focus in February.

## **OPEN TO THE PUBLIC**

Mr. Martin moved to open the meeting to the public, seconded by Ms. Sank.

Francis Gavigan asked what the committee is doing concerning the Penn East pipeline issue. Chair Robbi stated the Township Committee sent to the federal agency FERC a well-researched letter stating East Amwell’s opposition to the proposed pipeline.

Ms. Gavigan mentioned in New England pipeline initiatives find an easier time passing when they try to lay a pipe next to an existing one, like we have in East Amwell.

Mr. Martin moved to close the meeting to the public; seconded by Mr. Gardner.

**NEXT MEETING**

A meeting in February may be cancelled.

Ms. Katz asked if agendas and minutes could be emailed to the members. All but Ms. Sank and Mr. Gardner agreed.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Mr. Gardner made a motion, seconded by Mr. Martin, and unanimously approved by all to adjourn the meeting at 8:45 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sande Katz, FOSPC Secretary

January 13, 2015