

EAST AMWELL TOWNSHIP
Farmland and Open Space Preservation Committee
January 11, 2016
7:30 p.m. East Amwell Municipal Building

1. CALL TO ORDER & OPEN PUBLIC MEETING NOTICE

The meeting was called to order at 7:35 p.m. by Pam Thier. In compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act, Pam Thier stated that this was a regular meeting held pursuant to the meeting notice published in the December 17, 2015, issue of the Hunterdon County Democrat. On January 5, 2015 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.

2. REORGANIZATION

Pam Thier asked for nominations for Chairperson. Mr. Martin motioned to nominate Glorianne Robbi to the position. Mayor Wang-Iverson seconded the motion. There were no other nominations. The motion passed unanimously.

Pam Thier asked for nominations for Vice Chairperson. Ms. Sank motioned to nominate Tim Martin to the position. Mayor Wang-Iverson seconded the motion. There were no other nominations. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Gardner motioned to continue holding the committee's meetings on the second Monday of the month at 7:30 p.m. Ms. Sank seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Ms. Thier asked for committee liaisons. Members volunteered as follows: Recreation Committee - Mr. Fick, Historic Preservation Committee – Ms. Sageser, Planning Board – Mr. Gardner, Township Committee - Mayor Wang-Iverson. It was noted that the Environmental Commission would select a new liaison at their next meeting.

3. OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Fred Gardner motioned, and Mayor Wang-Iverson seconded the motion to open the meeting to the public. There being no public present, Mr. Gardner motioned to close to the public. Mayor Wang-Iverson seconded and all were in favor.

4. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

Mr. Gardner moved to approve the minutes of the last meeting which was held October 19, 2015. Mayor Wang-Iverson seconded the motion. The minutes were approved with the correction that Mr. Martin is shown as having been in attendance on the roster of the September 14, 2015 meeting. All were in favor.

5. BILLS FOR APPROVAL

An invoice from Weeds Inc. in the amount of \$150 for invasive species control at the Ridge Road Assemblage property was presented for approval by Ms. Thier. Mayor Wang-Iverson motioned to approve the payment. Mr. Martin seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

6. ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

Mayor Wang-Iverson mentioned that Hunterdon County posted changes to its Open Space, Farmland, and Historic Preservation Trust Fund Plan which brought concerns to the public.

Ms. Thier explained that this plan is the document which guides the use of the County's open space tax fund. She summarized that the overarching concern was that land acquisition as a priority for use of the tax would be superseded by maintenance of property and facilities. Mayor Wang Iverson stated that he also thought the plan called for the fund to be used for infrastructure improvement as well. He also stated that the various uses for the fund should be delineated in the plan on a percentage basis in order for the public to understand the needs and priorities for the fund. Mr. Gardener requested that Ms. Thier prepare a letter to the County reflecting this idea for inclusion into the plan. Pam stated that the County's Open Space and Recreation Committee would be holding a public hearing on the re-draft of the plan on January 19th. Ms. Sageser suggested that a member of the Committee be present at this hearing to advance the idea. Ms. Thier stated that she and Glorianne Robbi would be present as the Open Space Committee would also be discussing the Township's Cooperative grant application for the Higgins acquisition.

7. UNFINISHED BUSINESS None reported

8. OLD BUSINESS

Ms. Thier reported on the status of acquisition projects since the last meeting as follows:

- Higgins Property: The New Jersey Conservation Foundation reports that the seller signed the option agreement for the first phase of the project. Both appraisals are due to be complete by mid-February. The anonymous foundation has committed to supporting the project in the amount of \$1,000,000.
- Plimpton Property: The subdivision which was needed to effect a partial acquisition of the land was denied, and the property was sold in its entirety to a private buyer.
- East Jersey Developers: The property was closed by D&R Greenway at the end of October.
- Mudd: D&R Greenway reports that there are title issues holding up closing at this time.

9. NEW BUSINESS None reported.

10. REPORTS

Administrator: Ms. Thier reported that the Township is in receipt of the Green Acres Project Agreements and that the enabling resolution required for the agreements to be signed was approved at the Township Committee meeting held December 10, 2015. She stated that she was in the process of reconciling the properties to be included on the Open Space Inventory which is to be made part of these agreements. Once the agreements are returned to the State, the funds (\$310,000) will be encumbered for the Township's use. She further reported that she attended a meeting with representatives at the SADC in reference to the annual Planning Incentive Grant Program application which she prepared in the form of the annual application letter. She stated that if the balance of the Township's grant funds (\$937,000) is not earmarked relatively soon, the SADC could allocate the funds elsewhere in the State. She explained that these monies represent the 60% State cost share of an agricultural preservation project. She also reported that the County cooperative grant application for the Higgins property was submitted on December 30th, and that the review of the application will take place at the County Open Space Committee meeting on Tuesday December 19th at 7:00 p.m.

Planning Board: Mr. Gardner reported that the Planning Board continued to work towards responding to the Affordable Housing requirements mandated by the State.

Recreation Committee: Mr. Fick reported that the Recreation Committee facilitated a successful tree lighting ceremony in December, and is now planning for the annual Easter Egg Hunt. Mayor Wang-Iverson inquired as to the parking dilemma for the South County soccer league. Mr. Fick reported that the matter has not yet been resolved, but discussions are ongoing.

Historic Preservation: Ms. Sageser noted that the Historic Preservation Committee was in the process of making application to the County for a second construction grant towards work on the Clawson House in the amount of \$75,000. She further reported that 136 additional properties were to be added to the Township's historic structure inventory and that the County also provided suggestions for additional sites.

11. CORRESPONDENCE None reported

12. ANNOUNCEMENTS

13. OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Pam Thier noted for the record that no members of the public were present.

14. NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the next meeting would be held on Monday February 8th at 7:30 p.m.

15. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Fick made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Martin seconded the motion, all were in favor and the meeting adjourned at 8:20 p.m.