

Open Space Committee

Andover Township

October 23, 2007

The Chairman, Dan Freed, opened the meeting at 6:45 p.m. Present were members Dan Freed, Lois deVries, Diane Gillespie, Michael Morel, Gail Phoebus. Absent: Carla Kostelnik Late arrivals: Michael Morel (6:50 p.m.), Mary Grace Rudolph (7:00 p.m.), Cece Pattison (7:20 p.m.). Also present: Barbara Davis and Elizabeth Lee, Morris Land Conservancy; Mary Spector, Secretary.

The Chairman called for the flag salute and roll call.

Minutes: A motion was made by Phoebus, seconded by Gillespie, to approve the minutes of the September 25, 2007 meeting as amended. In favor: Gillespie, Phoebus, deVries, Freed. Opposed: None. Motion carried.

Adoption of Agenda: Dan noted a discussion of the proposed open space maps should be added to new business. Lois suggested they delete the update on historic sites as Carla and Cece are not present. Gail suggested they should contact Estelle Campbell who is a good source for historic information in the township. A motion was made by Phoebus, seconded by Gillespie, to adopt the agenda as amended. All in favor. Motion carried.

The Chairman opened the meeting to the public. There were no comments from the public.

County grant application: Dan stated Sandy Urgo of the Morris Land Conservancy told him that the application to the County is under consideration. She will be going ahead with the property appraisal as approved by the Township Committee. It should be completed in a month or so. Dan reported there is interest on the state level on the other property Sandy had discussed.

New Business: Dan mentioned the importance of support for Proposition 3 on the state ballot. He asked about the sign in front of the building saying "Don't Vote for Proposition 3." Gail stated she spoke to the Clerk who spoke to the Township Attorney and apparently the sign is all right if it is in the County right-of-way. Mike noted he has a problem with the state borrowing additional funds given the current financial problems of the state. He stated personally he does not support Proposition 3. Dan noted the Committee did not discuss the issue of support for the proposition before speaking out about it. He pointed out the township would not get matching funds for open space acquisition if the proposition is not passed. Gail raised the question of whether this is a discussion about politics that should not be discussed. Barbara Davis suggested those who are interested can contact the Keep It Green campaign.

Procedures for Public Hearing: Barbara stated that Gail should welcome the public to the hearing as a member of the Township Committee. Dan will do the introductions and she will explain why the hearing is being held and the process. Dan noted the Township has collected a number of open space surveys. He mentioned there will be a variety of viewpoints presented. It was decided to set a deadline of November 1st for the submission of the survey forms.

Barbara discussed the formation of the open space map. She noted it has changed since the tour last month. It is based on tax assessment data. For example, vacant land is classified as Class 1; residential greater than 5 ac. is Class 2; farmland property is Class 3. The dark brown areas on the map signify preserved farmland. Golf courses are included in the classification for commercial properties. Dan suggested that golf courses have their own color on the map. Barbara noted municipal or state owned lands are colored purple; green indicates permanently preserved areas. She stated the map should be regional in nature and suggested adding farm parcels from adjoining municipalities. Lois pointed out many commercial properties are missing. Barbara stated only those over 5 acres are shown. She noted properties left white do not meet the criteria for open space. Everything colored on the map does meet the criteria. Barbara stated the greenways map will be more focused.

Recess: The Chairman called a recess from 7:20 p.m. to 7:40 p.m.

Public Hearing: Gail greeted the public on behalf of the Township Committee and thanked them for their attendance. Dan welcomed everyone and thanked ANJEC for funding for the grant to prepare the open space plan. He introduced Barbara Davis and Elizabeth Lee from the Morris Land Conservancy. Barbara noted the Morris Land Conservancy was hired to prepare the open space plan and also to help locate and acquire properties for open space. The Conservancy has prepared 50 such plans around the state. Barbara noted the purpose of the hearing tonight is to get public input on the plan. She pointed out the map they have prepared to date is a draft and anyone noting an error on the map should let them know. She mentioned the survey and encouraged those who hadn't done so to submit a completed form. She stated they are looking for feedback on what is important for preservation and why or why not.

Bruce Whipple stated there is a need for recreation fields. Scott Price stated he is the President of the Lake Lenape Little League. He agreed with Mr. Whipple. Whipple recommended finding space for fields with multi-purpose use, including jogging and nature trails, ponds, etc. Barbara mentioned several funding sources for development of trails. Gail discussed the recent grant application for trail development. She noted the funding request was denied because there is not enough population in this area. Phil Boyce recommended leaving land open for wildlife habitat. Barbara noted that public funding requires public access to a site. Someone asked about competing with other towns for funding. Barbara noted 90% of the County open space funds goes to farmland preservation. She asked about agriculture in the township. The audience agreed it's important to save. Diane Gillespie she would like to see more wildlife corridors and other ways to connect neighborhoods in the township. Gail noted the trail they were planning to develop would connect the two schools and go under Newton Sparta Rd. and to Lake Iliff and Kittatinny Park. Barbara pointed out the township can ask developers to help meet the need for trails. She discussed the idea of a recreation center with multi-purpose uses, combining recreation with wildlife preservation and trails.

Lois pointed out the need for stewardship of open space and for protection of the watershed and aquifer. Barbara stated management of open spaces is important. Richard Sullivan asked about zoning and ratables in relation to open space. Barbara stated the open space map is not a zoning map. The open space plan will become part of the master plan. It is not a regulatory document; it gives recommendations. She noted it is important to balance open space with development and

growth and stated the plan should be reviewed annually to see that it is still relevant. Barbara emphasized it is a way to balance development. Phil Boyce suggested the township should study the number of children in the area to determine future need and particular uses for open space. Barbara suggested the township may want to develop a recreation plan or facilities improvement plan in the future. She noted the current plan is broader and less specific.

Scott Price pointed out the Little League grows every year and fields in town are scarce. It was noted there is no lacrosse field in the township and also mentioned that hunting is a potential use for open space. Tom Walsh noted it takes time to get a recreational field ready for use. He stated there is very little recreational open space available for adults. Barbara asked about priorities for open space in addition to recreational use. Mike Lensak asked about areas for development, including COAH housing, if the available land is used for open space and recreational use. Gail noted there should be enough land to meet the COAH obligation as well. Barbara explained to the public that now that the township has its own open space tax it can apply to the county for open space funding grants. She stated private funding is also available. Lois deVries mentioned the old cemeteries in town are at risk because of development pressures.

Barbara noted this public hearing is required. The next one will be held on January 22, 2008. Dan concluded the meeting by thanking all those in attendance for their participation. The meeting was concluded at 9:00 p.m.

Submitted by Mary Spector, Secretary