



MIDDLE TOWNSHIP ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION MINUTES OF JUNE 19, 2013

Meeting called to order at 7:05 PM

Reading of Open Public Meetings Act Statement by Chairman

I hereby declare that notice has been given to the Herald Times and posted on the bulletin board of the Middle Township Municipal Building, stating the time and place of the following meeting, as required in P.L. 1975, Chapter 231 of the State of New Jersey. (Sunshine Law).

ATTENDANCE:

MEMBERS: Steve Atzert, Vilma Pombo, Betsy Haskin, Larissa Smith, Dawn Stimmel

Also in attendance was Shane Godshall from the American Littoral Society.

ABSENT: Gary Farrow, Rachel Shepherd, Jeff Schafer, Susan Copson, Lillian Armstrong

MINUTES OF LAST MEETING:

Approval of Minutes – April 17, 2013 and May 15, 2013

On Motion By: Vilma Pombo

Seconded By: Larissa Smith (voting in place of Gary Farrow)

Minutes were approved by all.

1.) Communications

- Arthur Ponzio Co. & Associates, Inc. - Applicant: Monterey Motel, Inc. – Block: 348.02; Lot(s) 2.10; Address: Indian Trail/663 Shunpike Rd.; Use Variance & Major Site Plan – Going before Zoning Board on June 13, 2013.- The Environmental Committee is opposed to filling in any wetlands and that this should be redesigned so that no fill is needed.

Vote taken: On Motion By: Betsy Haskin 2nd By: Vilma Pombo

Approved by all in attendance.

Comments on this subject at December 12, 2012 meeting was the consensus amongst the Environmental Committee members that this should not be allowed.

- ShopRite – Earth Day 2013 Information – Information from Shop Rite regarding Earth Day was handed out to members.

- 4-H Fair Guidelines for 2013 – Environmental Committee is not participating this year.

2) Sustainable Report – Liz Terenik - NONE

3) Unfinished Business

- Middle Township Farmers Market – Steve has given up on Farmers Market at this point. To get one together for next year, we have to start now. Betsy wanted to know if there was some type of grant we could get to help us get started. Steve said he is going to speak with Jill Becker in the Township's Grant Department to see if she knows if there is anything available. Steve feels that if we get away from trying to do the Farmers Market on Friday, that we could possibly use the 4-H Fairgrounds.
- News Release on final Open Space and Recreation Plan- (See Attachment "A") Steve is going to get this to Alex Davis at the Gazette after a couple of small changes are made. He is also going to submit to the Herald.

4.) New Business –

- ANJEC - Invoice and Voucher Certification Form – 2013 Membership Dues
On Motion By: Betsy Haskins motioned the EC pay the dues (voting in place of Rachel Shepherd)
2nd By: Larissa Smith
Approved by all in attendance.
- ATV's in New Jersey – Discussed how this should be handled. Larissa feels it has to be handled by law enforcement. Steve said he may do a press release to the editor. Under the new law ATV's need to be licensed. Committee feels that Township Committee should draft up an Ordinance more specific to ATV's.
- ANJEC Report – Meadow Habitat or obnoxious growth. Steve and Betsy feel the Township's ordinance should be changed to allow for more natural growth of a wildlife yard for residents. They said that Cape May Point has an ordinance permitting the growth of a wildlife yard. Steve asked that Dawn get a copy of that. Will be discussed at next meeting. Vilma is also getting more information together on this.
- Recommend Township Committee support SCR 138 to let voters decide on Green Acres, Blue Ares, farmland preservation and historic preservation. (See Attachment "B")

Shane Godshall spoke on behalf of the American Littoral Society about getting Middle Township Committee to support the Sustainable Funding for the Preservation and Stewardship of New Jersey's Open Spaces, Parks, Waterways, Farmland and Historic Sites. He said changes have been made since the last attempt to get the municipalities to do a resolution. He said so far

15 counties in New Jersey have endorsed the plan, as well as the New Jersey League of Municipalities. It is non-committal on the municipality's part. This will be voted on by the public at the General Election if enough support is shown by the municipalities.

A motion was made to recommend that Township Committee support SCR138 to let voters decide on Green Acres, Blue Acres, farmland preservation and historic preservation.

On Motion By: Vilma Pombo

2nd By: Betsy Haskin (voting in place of Rachel Shepherd)

Approved by all in attendance.

5.) Reports - NONE

COMMENTS:

10.) Meeting adjourned (time) 7:55 PM

On Motion By: Vilma Pombo

Seconded By: Betsy Haskins (voting in place of Rachel Shepherd)

Motion passed to adjourn meeting.

ATTACHMENT "A"

SUGGESTED

What Does the Middle Township Open Space and Recreation Plan Mean to You?

In the summer of 2012 the Middle Township Committee recieved an \$8,000 matching fund grant from the Association of New Jersey Environmental Commissions funded by the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation. This grant was to help the Township develop "capacity-based, sustainable land use plans and ordinances."

Work on the plan began in August of 2012. Members of the Township Environmental Commission, Recreation Advisory Board and the Economic Development Council worked closely with the author of the plan, Elizabeth Terenik of Terneik land Use Planning in developing the plan. Stakeholder groups were identified and interviewed to get their input. In the fall an electronic questionnaire was put on-line to gather additional input from the public. The public also provided substantial input at two evening meetings -- one on Tuesday, January 22 at the Martin Luther King Community Center and one on Thursday, March 21 at the Devico Senior Center.

The final plan was presented to and approved by the Township Planning Board on April 24, 2013 and adopted into the Middle Township Master Plan.

The major goals of the Open Space and Recreation Plan are to:

- Maintain the character and integrity of each community within the Township
- Promote the preservation and management of land for wildlife habitat, to improve water quality and supply, and to provide for open space
- Develop public recreation facilities that meet the current and future needs of the residents, and contribute to an improved quality of life

A few of the primary recommendations of the plan include:

- Prioritize and support the acquisition of land for conservation based on ecological value, such as groundwater recharge areas, wildlife habitat, and flood hazard areas.
- Develop Ockie Wisting Recreation Complex
- Redesign the Davies Sports Complex
- Improve three Delaware Bay recreation areas
- Identify connectors to and expand the Middle Township Bike Path
- Increase public information regarding all recreation and open space facilities in the Township

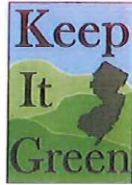
The plan contains maps and descriptions of existing open space and explains their many environmental, economic and social benefits. In Middle Township there are:

- 21 recreational and open space facilities, including the nationally-recognized Cape may County Zoo
- A diversity of ecosystems, including salt and freshwater marshes, upland and wetland forests
- ~~Substantial~~ Federal, State, County and non-profit protected open space areas

The plan is an important part of the center-based development policy adopted by the Township through the 2010 Master Plan. The idea is to encourage development in areas of existing constructed infrastructure, and encourage maintenance of green infrasture in outlaying areas. In other words, develop the Township in a way that values environmental, economic and social wellbeing.

Check out the entire plan at: <http://www.middletownship.com/Sustainable%20Jersey/Open%20Space/Middle%20Township%20Open%20Space%20and%20Recreation%20plan.pdf>. If you don't have internet access at home, you can read the document on-line at the Cape May County Public Library.

ATTACHMENT "B"



Campaign to preserve New Jersey's parks, natural areas, clean water, farmland, and historic treasures

204 W. State Street, Trenton, NJ 08608 Tel: (609) 392-1181
Website: www.NJKeepItGreen.org

SUPPORT SUSTAINABLE FUNDING FOR THE PRESERVATION & STEWARDSHIP OF NEW JERSEY'S OPEN SPACES, PARKS, WATERWAYS, FARMLAND & HISTORIC SITES

New Jersey Keep It Green (KIG), a coalition of over 180 conservation, park and recreation, sportsmen, agricultural and historic preservation groups, strongly supports bipartisan legislation (SCR138/ACR179) that would ask voters to approve dedicating one-fifth of one cent in sales-tax revenues for 30 years for preservation and stewardship through the Green Acres, Blue Acres, Farmland & Historic Preservation Programs. KIG also supports (S2529/A3824) to implement the sales-tax dedication.

- All funds from the 2009, \$400 million bond act are now fully allocated for Green Acres, Blue Acres, Farmland and Historic Preservation, so **funds must be replenished this year to prevent decades of successful open space and farmland preservation efforts from coming to an end.**
- **\$200 million is less than 1% of state revenues** and approx. 2.5% of sales-tax revenues (FY12 figures). The dedication would not begin until FY2015, so there would be **no impact on next year's budget.** Sales-tax revenues have historically grown and are projected to increase by more than \$200 million annually going forward. **If sales-tax revenues were to decline, the allocation to preservation programs would be automatically reduced.**
- A 2013 survey of 600 likely voters found that **75% support dedicating 1/5 of one cent of sales-tax revenues for 30 years to sustain preservation efforts.**
- **Every \$1 invested in state preservation programs returns \$10 in economic value** to the state through nature's good and services, such as water filtration and flood control, and supports key industries.
- **The NJ League of Municipalities, NJ Highlands Council, and 15 counties have passed resolutions** supporting sustainable funding for preservation and stewardship.
- Green Acres and Blue Acres help protect communities from more frequent and intense storms, by buying-out flooded properties and protecting and restoring natural buffers to coastal and inland waterways that can help absorb and **mitigate flooding.**
- Hundreds of thousands of acres of priority lands in the Highlands, Pinelands and elsewhere require preservation to permanently **protect drinking water supplies** and important natural areas.
- The state must preserve an additional **350,000 acres of farmland** to maintain a viable agricultural industry, the state's third largest industry, and provide healthy, local produce for our families.
- Too many communities still lack access to quality parks close to home, especially in our urban areas, where **kids need safe, healthy places to play outdoors and to help combat childhood obesity.**
- SCR138/ACR179 are modeled after the bipartisan 1998 Garden State Preservation Trust Act.

Sample Municipal Resolution: Supporting Sustainable State Funding for Preservation and Stewardship of Open Space, Parks, Farmland and Historic Sites in New Jersey

WHEREAS, New Jersey has a long and successful history of preserving open space, parks, farmland, and historic sites; and

WHEREAS, the Green Acres Program has helped to preserve over 650,000 acres of land and supported more than 1,100 park development projects over the past 50 years; the State Agricultural Development Committee has preserved 200,000 acres of farmland over the past 30 years; and the Historic Trust has preserved 477 historic sites over the past 45 years; and

WHEREAS, all remaining funds for these programs under the Green Acres, Water Supply and Floodplain Protection, Farmland and Historic Preservation Bond Act of 2009 will be fully allocated by the end of 2012; and

WHEREAS, (Insert name) Township/Borough/Town has been a direct beneficiary of, and partner to, these critical state preservation programs; and

WHEREAS, substantial unmet needs remain for additional land and water protection, park development, and farmland and historic preservation, for the health and welfare of our communities and residents; and

WHEREAS, it is imperative that a long-term, dedicated source of funding be established in order to:

- sustain open space, farmland, and historic preservation programs beyond the 2009 Bond Act
- improve and ensure proper stewardship of parks, preserved lands, and historic sites
- provide equitable access to quality parks and recreation in urban, suburban, and rural areas
- match and leverage local, county, and private funds for these purposes
- protect drinking water supplies, water quality, and alleviate costly flood damages
- preserve fish and wildlife habitat and provide public access for hunting and fishing
- revitalize cities and towns
- protect our quality of life and economic prosperity.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED on this ____ day of _____, 2012, by the Township/Borough/Town of _____ in _____ County, State of New Jersey, that:

1. _____ Township/Borough/Town supports establishment of a long-term, dedicated source of state funding for these purposes.
2. A certified copy of this resolution be served upon Governor Chris Christie, Senator _____, Assemblyman/woman _____, and _____, and
(over)

