

Raritan Township Open Space Committee AGENDA Wednesday February 11, 2017 5:30 PM Raritan Twp Municipal Bldg

Members: Present: Committeeman Richard Chen, Committeeman Craig O'Brien, Tony Hajjar Township Engineer, Chair Amy Greene, Joel Throne, Timothy McCarthy, Ryan Edge, Absent: Steve Farslou, James Miller (Planning Board liaison)

I. Active Near Term Open Space Acquisition projects:

1. **Francavilla** – Block 43 Lot 2, 97 Plum Brook Rd. 44 acres. Est. \$350,000 (high estimate). 908-996-6995; 772-546-6364; 732-254-30035 Rittenhouse Road, Frenchtown, NJ 08825 dickfrancavilla@netzero.com. He is very interested in selling for open space. Need to use Green Acres funds to be eligible for future funding.

Funding scenario:

Green Acres funds 50%	\$175,000
D&R Greenway 20% non-profit Hunterdon Co funding;	\$ 70,000
NJ Conservation Foundation 30% county coop funding	<u>\$105,000</u>
Total	\$350,000

NJ Water Supply Authority will pay 50% soft costs and Green Acres will pay 50% soft costs. Soft costs include boundary survey, preliminary assessment for hazardous waste, attorney fees and appraisal (\$1,700 + \$1,900). **Net cost to township: \$0**

The funding partners are very interested in moving forward and the seller is also very enthusiastic about selling the property for open space.

- Appraisals have been ordered – Norman Goldberg - \$1,700 and Tom Rodruigez - \$1,900

2. **NJ Conservation Foundation (NJCF) Croton properties: Hollenbach**, – Hunterdon County approved coop funding of 30%. Hunterdon Co approved 20% nonprofit grant for NJCF. Approximately Green Acres funds from Raritan Township toward purchase and 50% of soft costs, NJ Water Supply Authority is funding the other 50% of soft costs. Hollenbach needs subdivision approval. **Need township ordinance for Hollenbach as well for use of Green Acres funds, once under contract.** Hollenbach requires \$48,000 Green Acres funds. All Croton properties would require about \$115,000 from Township Green Acres. **Had Meeting Jan. 12 with Marie Newel of NJCF. Tony Hajjar, Karen Gilbert, Amy Greene, Don Hutchins attended.**

II. Active Projects: Farmland:

1. **Bowlby –Reaville Rd. 172.78 acres. \$537,200 estimate for Township 20%.** Has received preliminary OK from SADC (Green Light Letter). Hunterdon County is willing to fund 20%. **Township is ordering appraisal.** Block 71, Lot 19 is 50.73 acres; Block 71, Lot 19.02 is 21.03 acres; Block 72.07, Lot 81 is 101.02. Raritan Township lead. Assuming \$15,800 per acre @170 acres = \$2,686,000 with our 20% share being \$537,200. Could use Hunterdon County municipal funds if they are available but may not be sufficient. Mr. Bowlby submitted applications for three parcels. **If insufficient state funding available through our pending grant County or State could be lead. County lead Raritan would still have to pay 20% but not soft costs. Appraisals have been ordered by the Township (3 appraisals each) – Tom Rodriguez - \$3,900; Norman Goldberg - \$4,250**

2. **Stothoff River Road Farmland application to County** - It was estimated at 42 acres @ \$16k per acre totaling ~\$670k. Hunterdon Land Trust Jackie Middleton is applying for State and Federal funds. Need Stothoff to file lot line adjustment with the deed. **Hunterdon Land Trust Submitted Federal funding application 1/26/17**

3. **Jared Weeks – B 84 Lot 2.06 48 acres. \$16,000 per acre twp 20% = \$153,600.** Township approved access. County lead. SADC is reviewing. Tony to respond to questions. Meeting scheduled to discuss Thursday Jan 12 with Mayor, Don Hutchins, Tony Hajjar, Amy Greene. **Need Raritan Township Resolution of preliminary support after SADC has issued letter.**

4. **Sabo Farm Block 10 Lot 2** – 6 acres, Raritan Township. Block 35 Lot 17 Franklin Township – 76 acres. Has preliminary CADB and SADC Green Light Letter. Bernice Sabo. Raritan can expect their portion to average between \$9000

and \$16000 per acre which at 20% cost share would translate to between \$1800-\$3200 per acre or \$10,800 and \$19,200 for the total 6 acre parcel. Township resolution of preliminary support approved 2/7/17.

5. **Fred and Jo-Ann Van Doren Farm (also partially in East Amwell)** – Block 77 Lots 9 (61.13 acres) and 10.17 (24.24 acres). If not federally or state funded would need 20% - 72 acres @\$16,000= \$1,152,000 x .2= \$230,400. No application yet. Stephanie Miller of SADC is talking with them.

II. **New properties for consideration:**

New property alerts - Future property alerts Joel Throne

III. **Funding**

1. **Township Open Space fund** – Township Committee adopted ordinance 16-25 to extend the Open Space Tax for 5 years 2017-2021.

2017	1.5 cents per 100 dollars of assessed valuation
2018	1.0 cents per 100 dollars of assessed valuation
2019	0.8 cents per 100 dollars of assessed valuation
2020	0.5 cents per 100 dollars of assessed valuation
2021	0.5 cents per 100 dollars of assessed valuation

Due to debt repayment and tax reduction between 2017 and 2020 \$470,274 available for open space in 2021 an additional \$54,382 available = \$524,656 over 5 years. If restored to 1.5 cents would have total of \$1,827,900 in 2021 with \$511,762 \$235,413 \$239,393 \$378,449 \$464,692 each year.

Need to increase funding in order to fund additional space preservation including farmland. Can be changed by ordinance at any time.

2. **Green Acres Funding – Public Open Space only** -Have \$106,485. Green Acres has slated \$550,000 for Raritan for next funding round. Total \$656,485. Total Committed to: Croton properties partnering with NJ Conservation Foundation - Hollenbach (\$48,000+-) and soft costs. Propose Green Acres funding for Francavilla - \$175,000 estimate. Total nearterm project need - \$223,000. Green Acres Contacts: Kerry Owens, Land Acquisition; Kerry.owen@dep.nj.gov; Recreation Development Loans: Cecile Murphy cecile.murphy@dep.nj.gov

3. **County Municipal Allocation - Public Open Space and Farmland** – in 2016 we had about \$663,998 in this fund but \$400,000 was transferred to the Township open space fund. Adding in 2016 revenues the current balance is \$372,059. The county fund accrues at about \$120,000 per year. (10 percent of what the county gets in taxes from our property owners or 0.3 cents per \$100 of assessed value). The County Open Space Trust Fund guidance is on their website at <http://www.co.hunterdon.nj.us/openspac.htm>.

\$537,000 + will be needed for Bowlby Farm preservation.

\$153,600 will be needed for Weeks Farm, planning board approved request for access.

\$230,400 Van Doren Farm, funding not yet determined

\$10,800-\$19,200 – Sabo Farm

Total needed near term - \$940,200 plus soft costs

Appraisal and survey costs will be needed for municipal lead projects - Bowlby

Limited funds available from Hunterdon County Municipal Grant fund. Could fund Bowlby by 2018 but could not do Weeks until 2019 and Van Doren not until 2021. **Need to increase Raritan Township Open Space Tax.**

4. **Agricultural Preservation Plan** – \$12,000. Submitted review comments to Maser. We have a little breathing room with the deadline for submission before SADC pulls our funds, but can't wait too long. If we don't move forward with Bowlby could lose the money. Would provide over \$1.2 million for State share of farmland

preservation which on a township lead project would fund 60%, cooperation with County to provide 20% and municipal open space funds needed for remaining 20%. Still waiting for revised plan from Maser. Dan Bloch. dbloch@maserconsulting.com. Planning Board will need to approve plan and then submit to SADC.

IV. Stewardship planning – Harry Quinn / Steve Farsiou/ Richard Chen

1. Wildlife Management Committee.–Rich Chen.
2. Micek Farm Park - Steve Farsiou – Steve, Amy, Steve Parente, Tony Hajjar, John Belle, and DPW staff met in April and on May 5 and walked the site. Tony and John Belle prepared a concept plan for walking trails throughout and parking on Johanna Farms road. Possible future playground and trail connections to Lenape Park. John Belle did sketch. Drafted concept plan. Eagle Scout disk golf project – John Belle met with Schuyler Reed. Township Committee approved plan. Parking lot and mowing needed. Setting up meeting with neighbors and township.
3. Hunterdon County Open space and Recreation plan. – in preparation.
4. Ewing Farm – Concept plan was prepared by John Belle and submitted to Bill Millette at Hunterdon County for consideration. To be considered with County Parks Plan per Bill Millette. Recent communication with neighbor asking for amenities.

FUTURE PROJECTS: See open space plan

1. Campbell Property – 70.12 acres. B 25 L 5. \$1,753,075 Next to Uplands County Park. We included this in the Green Acres request. They also own Farm on Barton Hollow Road adjacent to the property Possible Farmland preservation for one or both. Jamie is talking to owner. Husband just passed.
2. Sullivan Property – Harmony School Road. Forested property headwaters of Neshanic River.
3. Voorhees Associates – 90 Acres B 40 L 5 \$4,850,000
4. Darts Mill property – Lachemyer? Possible Blue Acres
5. Sferra Farm (near Micek and Lenape) farmland?– Mr. Sferra recently passed away.
6. Other farmland –Case, Blumberg, Cervenka, Kuhl properties; Mavrode Farms, Mike Mavrode 908-788-3763.

Committee Member roles for discussion:

Real estate/property alerts and investigation - Joel Throne

Property evaluation, Property owner outreach, grant applications - Amy Greene and ?

Property acquisition assistance, funding and contracts – Tony Hajjar

Stewardship and Passive recreational use plan development - Steve Farslou, Tim McCarthy Rich Chen

Micek Property improvements - Steve Farsiou

Hunterdon County Open Space Committee Liaison –

Agricultural Preservation Plan Development – ?

Action items:

1. Amy Greene will update the open space plan for review at the next meeting.
2. Richard Chen volunteered to promote farmland preservation and develop a strategy for engaging the landowners in the program.
3. Ryan Edge will investigate properties for potential development for active recreation including the NJDOT Bypass properties on Bartles Corner Rd and Junction Rd (rt 523).
4. Farmland preservation plan was distributed again to all members for review.

Next meetings 5:30 PM: March 8, April 12, May 10, June 14, July 12, Aug 9, Sept 13, Oct 11, Nov 8, Dec 13, 2017