

Readington Township Open Space Advisory Board Meeting Minutes

February 1, 2017

Attendance:

Member	JAN 4	FEB 1	MAR 1	APR 5	MAY 3	JUN 7	AUG 2	SEP 6	OCT 4	NOV 1
Mrs. Allen	X	X								
Mr. Becker	X	X								
Mr. Heller	X									
Mr. Huelsebusch	X	X								
Dr. Hendrickson	X	X								
Dr. Kelly	X	X								
Mrs. Madon	X	X								
Mrs. Duffy	X									
Mr. John	X	X								
Mr. Klotz	X	X								
Mrs. Owen	X	X								

Members of the public: Charles Skee.

1. The Chairman calls the meeting to order at 7:06 p.m. announcing that all laws governing the Open Public Meetings Act have been met and that this meeting has been duly advertised.

2. Approval of the minutes: Mr. Becker made a motion to approve the minutes of the January 4, 2017 meeting. It was seconded by Dr. Hendrickson. Motion passed unanimously.
 Approval of the 2017 meeting schedule: Mr. Klotz made a motion to approve the meetings, seconded by Dr. Kelly. The motion passed unanimously.

3. Communications / Meeting Calendar / Monthly Walks / Event Updates:
 - a. A suggestion was made to have a section on the Township website for maps of the trails. In addition, the website needs to be updated. Perhaps information on the emerald ash borer and other tree diseases could be included.
 - b. At the March meeting there will be a discussion of the website. Board members should look at the website and make suggestions at the March meeting.
 - c. Mr. Klotz announced the following schedule of Open Space hikes: February 19, Round Mountain from Bouman Stickney to Deer Path Park; March 19, Cole Road Greenway-East; April 23 (fourth Sunday), Lazy Brook Greenway, since the third Sunday of the month is Easter.
 - d. Township resident Charles Skee, who has been involved in trails and trail maintenance over many years, expressed an interest in the trails in the Township, especially the blue trail (Cushetunk).
 - e. Dr. Kelly received a grant to help the Township develop deer exclosures, with fifty percent of the cost paid for with the grant. He is looking for sites, and the minimum size should be two to three acres.
 - f. Dr. Kelly's students have again tapped Norway maples at the Forest Hill Preserve for maple syrup.

4. Correspondence:

a. Vita Mekovetz sent a letter to Sheraine Arbitsman (estate of Delane Lipka), owner of 109 Pine Bank Road (Lot 66, Block 61), explaining that the Township is not interested in pursuing acquisition of the 1.3 acre parcel.

b. Mrs. Allen received an email from Chip Sheppard stating that he has resurrected Walk in the Woods with seventh grade students. It will take place in Spring. Mrs. Allen will forward the email from Mr. Sheppard to Board members.

c. Mr. Huelsebusch sent a letter, a copy of which was received by Board members, to 20 to 25 farm owners. It explained the farmland preservation program and announced an informational meeting to be held on February 8.

5. Regular Reports:

Farmland preservation and Green Acres Updates:

a. Farmland Preservation: The Schley and Cole properties are waiting closing. In regards to the Solomon Farm / Toll Brothers property on Route 202, the Township owns the easement, but it will be sold to the County and State. The Township will receive eighty percent of the value of the easement back.

b. Green Acres: No logging will be allowed on the Lorenz property if it is to be preserved. It will go back to the Planning Board.

Hunterdon County Parks and Open Space Advisory Committee Updates:

They are still looking at the Darts Mill property and one in Stanton Station.

Environmental Commission Updates:

None.

Readington Township Updates:

None.

Shade Tree Commission:

Dr. Hendrickson is attempting to find out who owns which ash trees.

6. Old and Ongoing Business:

a. The Forest Management Plan Commission is on hold at this time.

b. The final submission for the Forest Hill Preserve was approved. Mr. Becker will replace the tree signs that were vandalized.

c. The kiosk off Summer Road on the Lazy Brook Trail is falling over. We are waiting for a scout to take over the project, which was left incomplete by the previous scout. Board will follow up with Scott Jessman from the Department of Public Works to see if he can repair the kiosk.

d. Fourteen people attended the emerald ash borer seminar. Eighty-five miles of the Township's roads have been surveyed (fifty percent). One thousand ash have been identified. Readington is at risk due to the number of ash trees near the road. Those that succumb to emerald ash borer could fall. There is no legal definition of ownership of the trees. Who has the legal risk and liability? Trying to identify the ashes in the winter with no leaves is difficult for volunteers. Thought needs to be put into remediation methods and costs.

e. Mr. Klotz made a motion to send the report on the Township's ash trees to the Township Committee and schedule a presentation. Mrs. Allen seconded the motion, which passed unanimously. Mr. Becker and Dr. Hendrickson will present.

7. New Business:

a. The farm tour is scheduled for Sunday, May 7, 2017.

b. Mrs. Owen mentioned that the gully cutting across the Pleasant Run Trail by the bridge is too wide and deep for horses to cross.

c. There was a discussion regarding problems posed by trail volunteers, hikers and equestrians feeling threatened by unleashed and aggressive dogs, and also by ATV riders. Additional 'No Motorized Vehicles' signs and other strategies were discussed. Mr. Klotz and Mrs. Owen will plan to meet with the Chief of Police to see what the local police can do to safeguard the trails better.

d. Mr. Klotz asked what has been done regarding the encroachment onto Township open space from Block 94, Lot 19 on Lazy Brook Road.

8. Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 9:25 p.m.