

Vision Committee Meeting

6/24/14, 6pm – 7pm

Members Present: Neil Henry, Jerry Aroneo, Peter O'Neill, Lisa Scanlon

Guest: Bob Canace, (Consultant), President, Conservation Advising Services, LLC, 836 Route 94 Blirstown, NJ 07825 (908.246.9648, bob@conservationadvising.com)

This meeting was pulled together to speak with a consultant and gain a better understanding of what constraints may exist on the Kurz property from a development standpoint.

Bob Canace explained to the committee that the DEP uses remote sensing to rank and mark areas. Those areas marked as “2’s” and “3’s”—they are not as strict with like they are with areas marked as “4’s” and “5’s”. On areas which are “2’s” and “3’s”, we can probably get away with 50’ buffers vs. 150’ buffers. These numbers refer to the sensitivity being attributed to the area. For example, if they found a blue heron nest in an area—the ranking would increase. Mr. Canace asked if there is a LOI associated with this property—would like to see that. He would like to get a copy of a map from our engineer that is geo-referenced for the property.

Per Peter O'Neill, we currently have 38 potential ball field locations identified in our Open Space inventory. Mr. O'Neill and Jerry Aroneo pursued discussions with Mr. Canace on our ability to plead a hardship case with the DEP so that development on the Kurz property by the township would be looked upon more favorably by the DEP. Mr. Canace explained that the DEP does not have any mechanism to use to further a balancing act.

Per Mr. Canace, a bike trail can be a great premise; no one seems to talk about greenways anymore. We have a lot more latitude to go after “brown” (contaminated) areas to develop them for recreational areas—e.g., Railroad Ave. If we have 150’ buffers on the Kurz property, we will have big constraints on developing. Mr. Canace explained that much of what we are considering is outside his scope of expertise, and he suggests we contact another consultant, Amy Greene with “Go Strategies” (<http://amygreene.com>) who is a wetlands expert.

Per Jerry Aroneo, we did do a Phase I on this property to buy it, so we do know some things about the property already. The area on the property behind the Valley Memorial Funeral Home is all rock;

significantly stripped of any soil. There is a major rock outcropping there. It would be much easier to put a turf field there, but we would have to bring in a significant amount of soil to do so.

Bob Canace mentioned that we may want to look into US Fish & Wildlife and the Wetlands Preservation Program. There is a woman named Beth Cuneo in Pleasantville, NJ who might be able to help us. If this property was farmland, there might be more money available to us to restore wetlands on the property. They have a program where they will pay up to \$6k/acre to restore wetlands on property where there once was farming.

Mr. Canace also suggests we also look at soil conservation maps and go to the DEP imap. Once we launch the program we can try to find the Kurz property on the 1930's aerial photos. This map might support our cause. We could use this money to protect only the wetlands areas of the property—e.g., build vernal pools. We should consider trying to get a grant proposal together for next year (end of July is cut-off) through Green Acres for a Planning Incentive Grant ("P" Grant).

We ended this meeting with Mr. Canace reinforcing that we really need to get a consultant in who is an expert in wetlands delineation and DEP rules/permits. He strongly suggests we contact Amy Greene. Mr. Canace provided us with a lot of suggestions and considerations. He did not charge us for the meeting.