

Vision Committee Meeting Minutes

May 5, 2016 6:30pm

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

Don Farnell joined us. Several members of the public came to the meeting representing a new organization, "APRIL"—Activists for Passive Recreation in Long Hill.

Jerry Aroneo started of the meeting by explaining what the Vision Committee does and our limitations of authority. Jerry reviewed who everyone on the committee is and their roles. He explained some of the committee's constraints, the reason the committee was formed, and the process we went through as a township to purchase the Kurz property. Jerry took everyone through this extensive background for the benefit of the APRIL members in the room who had generated a lot of emails/conversations with individual members of the Vision Committee prior to the meeting. As Chairperson of the Vision Committee, Jerry felt it was important to try and clarify some points about the Vision Committee and its role in recommending possible active and passive recreation uses for the property now internally referred to as "Central Park".

On behalf of APRIL, organizer, Ashley Force of Gillette addressed the Vision Committee stating the following:

8% of our residents participate in sports, yet we have fields for them, and still don't have enough

Another member of APRIL said she was shocked about the installation of a turf field. She stated she has lived here for 45 years and never knew to look in the Echoes Sentinel for town news; had no idea a turf field was going in.

Per Ashley Force, she is concerned about the Kurz property and wants to know how much will be developed for passive recreation. She wants a grass dog park.

At 7:35pm, we started covering our meeting agenda items. Ashley Force and one other member of APRIL decided to stay for the rest of the meeting; all others left at this point.

Peter O'Neill moved to accept the minutes of 4/7/16; Neil Henry seconded. All in favor.

Neil Henry reported on the Open Space fund balance. There is approximately \$30k; some is encumbered for flood acquisition properties; some is encumbered for the purchase of the Eberle property. We anticipate an infusion of approximately \$250k/year from taxes collected to go back into the Open Space fund. Oratory contributes \$45k/year.

Regarding the Morris County Community Workshops on May 18th, and June 6th, Jerry Aroneo provided some background. Neil stated he will be attending the workshop on 5/18, and Joanna Askey and Rich Pfluger will attend as well on behalf of Open Space.

Regarding the park envelope and the paper street (extension of Railroad Ave.), the committee would like to have the property the township owns staked out. In addition, members of the committee asked whether or not we can get the adjacent property owner to remove the pile of topsoil from our property that they placed there. Neil responded that he will speak to Paul Ferriero about this on 5/9.

The committee would also like to get one comprehensive image of all of the contiguous township owned properties together.

Regarding the timeline for “Central Park”, we are still in a holding pattern. Neil Henry called both of the landscape architects we are considering and explained that we are stalled at the moment.

The committee engaged in a lengthy discussion regarding possible ways to fund the development of “Central Park”. We discussed several “what if’s”, and kept referring to a potential development price for consideration of \$5million - \$6million. Cornel suggested we run some numbers to better understand how we would have to pay for this. He asked us to consider the following:

(1) \$6 million cost for park development—pay for all at once

Do 15, 20, 25, 30 year bonds. Back in anticipated Open Space Trust dollars coming in. Figure in all tax impacts.

(2) Spend \$3 million to develop part of park today; and spend another \$3million in 7 years

(3) Spend \$2 million, \$2 million, \$2 million

Don Farnell asked about trees on the Walgreen’s and adjacent property—wants to know if they’ll be replaced.

Neil Henry explained that Spiro K. is out of the country. T. Golden is acting as his emissary in his absence. Paul Ferriero is still working on appraisals/property lines for a possible land swap. Paul is doing a footprint plan because Spiro has indicated he would like to put up a 25,000 square foot building/2 stories. Paul is trying to figure out where this would go. The Township is paying for this, but it is rough—just being used to figure out where the property lines would need to be drawn.

Meeting adjourned 8:38pm. Next meeting to be held 6/2/16.