

Vision Committee Meeting Minutes

June 2, 2016

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

Members of the public present: Don Farnell, Chuck Arenowitz

The meeting was called to order at 7:02pm.

The meeting minutes from the 4/7/16 meeting were amended and approved.

Cornel updated the committee on the Eberle property to let us know the proposed acquisition fell through. Apparently a lot of asphalt had been dumped on the property years ago. The current owners probably could have put a 2" cap of dirt over it, but time ran out on the Open Space Grant we received to purchase the property and we cannot get another extension on it. If the current owners fix the issue(s), they can probably come back and see us. However, for now, that puts \$225k back in the Open Space fund.

Neil Henry provided the committee with an overview of the monies in the Open Space Trust account along with some potential scenarios for borrowing the money to design and develop the "Central Park Property".

As of the date of this meeting, these are the balance is approximately \$305k. Our anticipate revenue sources into the fund are:

\$242k/year in tax collections

\$ 45k/year from Oratory

<\$110k> to fund the bond for the extra \$1 million needed to purchase the property

<\$400k> to fund the replacement of the turf carpet in the years to come

< \$75k> to fund the cost of the land swap/diversion

Cornel raised concerns about contracting with one of the landscaped architects to design the proposed development of this property at \$250k-\$350k. If we did that, then we would not have enough money to develop it for a while, and the DEP permits sought would expire before we could actually start construction.

The discussion evolved to talk about possible phase in options. Jerry said that he felt that Phase 1 should be the development of trails through the property. Peter raised concerns about the parking on Railroad Ave. and asked if we could have the property staked out.

Jerry pointed out that we will have to keep an eye on any proposed changes to DEP regulations coming in the future that may affect what we want to do with the property.

Chuck Arenowitz commented that when the purchase of the property was being considered, we considered purchasing this property for the purpose of flood retention and flood control. This property could, he noted, become a big lake. He asked if we should consult with our engineer and find a hydrology expert.

Neil responded that he would ask Paul. (Note: on June 15, 2016—Paul Ferreiro forwarded a copy of his email dated 4/30/14 which was sent to members of the Township Committee on why this property could not be used for the purposes of a flood control basin.)

The committee continued the discussion reviewing possible funding options for the development of the property. We discussed the possibility of creating a second Park Open Space Trust Fund (with voter approval). We could limit it to 15 years by statute so it does not go on in perpetuity. If we did this, possible scenario was discussed which would cost the average homeowner \$153/year additional for 15 years. However, no conclusion was reached on these discussions. Instead, it was decided we needed a tighter set of numbers to work off of from Len with some more specific instruction from us. We need a better understanding of the cost to borrow money for this project.

Peter asked where we were on getting a picture of all of the properties together that the township owns from “Central Park” over to Railroad Ave. Neil said he will ask our engineer to do this and stake out the property from Railroad Ave all the way over to Morristown Road.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:15pm.