

**Passaic County Open Space and Recreation Advisory Committee**  
**Meeting Minutes from June 13, 2018**

**Public Notice:** 5:31 read by Kathleen Caren

**Called to Order / Flag Salute:** 5:32 by Vice Chair – Bernie Vroom

**Visual Roll Call – Members Present:** Freeholder Assad Akhter, Kathleen M. Caren (County Open Space Coordinator), Vice Chair - Bernie Vroom (Bloomingdale), Secretary - Maria Flynn (Woodland Park), Alice Szepletowski (Clifton), Bhupendra V. Gadhavi (Wayne), Jonathan Pera (Engineering Dept.), John D. Pogorelc, Jr., Esq. (Assistant County Counsel), Matthew P. Jordan (Deputy County Administrator), Greg Moore (Parks Dept.), Angela Fields (Paterson), Steven Orsini, Jr. (North Haledon), Maria Elena Grant (West Milford), Isabel Agudelo (Passaic), Kelly Ruffel (County Cultural and Historic Affairs), Anne Kahwaty (Little Falls),

**Absent:** Chair - Sandy Lawson (Wanaque), Al Abedlaziz (Paterson), Amy Jolin (Ringwood), Cindy Frank (Hawthorne)

**Correspondence:** None

**Meeting Minutes:** Bernie Vroom asked committee if they had time to review minutes and if there were any questions. Nothing from committee, Bhupendra V. Gadhavi motion to accept, and Alice Szepletowski second, all in favor voted to accept.

**New Business: 2018 Open Space Trust Fund Applicant Presentations:**

**5:33 to 5:49 Clifton** – Mayor James Anzaldi and Debbie Oliver, Department of Recreation

- Mayor Anzaldi stated that the Athena Park is one of the best brown field renovations to green. Phase I is complete and now working on Phase II. The mayor is asking for our help on this project and thanked us for our help in funding a lot of the parks such as Schultheis Farm, Dundee Park and others. Debbie then addressed the committee and started out by saying their motto is “Follow us to Fun”. To keep this motto their parks must be clean, safe and accessible facilities. Zelenka now has erosion happening, back in 2000 or 2001 they crowned the field for better drainage and did irrigation due to flooding in that area and added lighting, new playground, improved the field house, but since then lost that and the crowning of the field. At this time they need to renovate the playground, fix basketball court asphalt, cut out small area for parking, upgrade lighting, install accessible bleachers with cut for wheelchairs, safety fencing and make improvements for bathrooms more accessible and safe. Discussion regarding field rotation, she is interested and will talk at another time with Bernie. Kathleen said there is still \$700,000 not spent on Athenia, Mayor stated must have been spent and will look into, Debbie said it is all encumbered and they started late, Kathleen asked would be good to drawn down since going back to 2014. Debbie is able to turn in one reimbursement request and is waiting on another to cash a check. Bhupendra asked if this is Phase II and if the scope has changed. Brief discussion about this is Phase II and now III since they added a facility building and scope of project hasn't changed.

**5:49 to 6:03 Little Falls** – Councilwoman Maria Martini-Cordonnier, Oliver Starnes, Grant Writer

- Councilwoman Cordonnier started out by saying the town is being revitalized with new restaurants, new businesses, and new development, and thanked the committee for pass grants on Duva (Paterson Avenue) Field. This is their major field, only field with lights; it is constantly being used, constantly being revitalized. They have a drainage issue on this field and need to put in drainage but can't until they get another field. Louis Field is their next option; they would like to make this the recreation zone. There is an existing softball field they want to revitalize; they would put lights so they have an alternative to their Duva Field. Want to take area and put parking in and will put in split rail fencing, non-pervious gravel rocks. Discussion about this flood area and the FEMA lots. The fields are not wide enough for regulation play but can be utilized for practice. This would elevate from Duva and once Duva is up they would have two strong fields in town. This is the biggest and most expensive of the development of this area with the lighting and refurbishment of field. Grant writer provided a quick overview of the project. They would put in safety fencing, replace backstop, put in two forms of lights: one is safety in the parking area and the other is stadium which would allow for evening use. Discussion regarding grass area, lights, increasing field size in the future. Committee asked about parking, other lots, could project be phased. Didn't feel it could be phased, are they are prepared to do it, and they have their own open space and would bond if necessary. Kathleen said application is asking for full funding with no municipal funding of \$688,000. Maria said she would push back, but notes they could have put in three applications but only chose to put one since this project is expensive and wants this to be the focus. All funds that go back to 2015 have not been drawn down; or is it a phased project? Maria said this was for Duva Field 2015 & 2016; history in town of not getting projects done on time and paper work not put in. She will check the status, since a lot of work has been done and they're preparing for the rest of project. Bhupendra questioned is final design is pending or is it complete regarding the older grants. Kathleen and Maria will look into because they don't believe that is correct.

**6:03 to 6:22 Passaic** - Vidya Nayak, CFO, Kevin Stevens (Grant Writer), Mayor Hector Lora, Jessica Lezcano, Superintendent of Recreation

- Kevin gave an overview of each project. Install all-in-one Splash Park and Ice Rink with surveillance system at Third Ward Park (across from Boat House). Asking for full funding of \$495,800 and includes Splash Park with drainage system, Ice Rink with synthetic ice, all landscaping and installation of surveillance system. To promote outdoor recreation by creating new recreational opportunities and transform the park into a four-season destination. City hoping to install close circuit television surveillance system near the new concession stands in the park to protect the structure and promote safety. Second priority is the dog park in Amory Park to promote outdoor recreation and a safe location for individuals and families and their dogs. This will be the first dog park in the city. Requesting full funding of \$187,350, which includes artificial turf and underground drainage insures the park remains clean, sanitary and inviting. Additional funding will purchase chain link fence, gates, water fountain, landscaping, trash receptacles, waste disposal bins. Third project is for eight (8) park tables and 16

benches at Madison & Hope Plaza. Requesting full funding \$10,608 and goal is to maximize city use of open space and promote outdoor recreation. Alice stated she noticed on unexpended list previously awarded funds for Third Ward Park Dog Park and it was said Amory is the first one. Hector said they had a community meeting and concerns about a Dog Park in Third Ward Park with barking, odors, safety. So now they are looking to redirect that project to Amory Park since this would be a better location. Kathleen stated the funds were for more than just a dog park that was given out last year and Passaic is still within the 24 months to complete the project. Passaic said they ended up creating a walking track around the school which got a lot of buy-in from the community. Brief discussion about the dog park and the track. Committee asked if surveillance equipment for Splash Park: does that go under security?, Kathleen said that has been discussed and historically haven't funded. Committee said there are grants out there for surveillance equipment. Bernie said to reach out to Mayor Baraka in Newark because he received grant funding for surveillance cameras. Brief discussion about where the surveillance will be used and \$20,000 is cost in the application. Mayor spoke about temporary Ice Rink they put in last year, got news coverage, was like a miniature Rockefeller Center, how community loved it and wants it back. Mayor Lora said they discovered a synthetic ice, which would allow rink to be up six (6) months, it is self maintaining, durable wouldn't have to come to ask for more money. Would be able to skate from November to April. Committee discussion about the rink being put where original was, Splash Park would go underneath, how it would work. Thanked us for the funds for the track and will create very first special needs autism track team. Mayor ended by saying this will promote safety, activities, and opportunities for the children and the families of Passaic.

\*\*\* Brief discussion by the committee about the Third Ward Park Dog Park not being done, track being put in. Kathleen stated this is first she is hearing of this. No money was expended for this and is part of a larger project. Kathleen said they changed the funding and was outside the realm of what our committee reviewed. Estimate \$75,000 for the track, Kathleen will follow up.

#### **6:29 to 6:53 Paterson** – Gianfranco Archimedes

- Two (2) applications for consideration for funding, one is the Van Houten House for architectural and engineering services that would result in construction documents. Further investigation of the structural conditions of the building, the construction documents to fund and actually move forward to a project to bring house back into public service. The house had been out of service since aggressive flooding back to Irene in 2010. He gave a brief history of the house, preservation plan, said building has major water infiltration, critical areas along the roof line coming in and trickling into foundation. The oldest part of the building, built in 1741 the corner also had water infiltration coming in from the roof line. Commissioner Joanne V. Wiley gave a brief history of Paterson and the house, which has been on the National Register since 1973 and NJ Historic register since 1972. Gianfranco mentioned that this is an opportunity for Paterson to connect as far back as its 18<sup>th</sup> century roots, as this is the oldest building in Paterson and has an intact interior. He then went into Hinchliffe Stadium project and brief history about this. Through a lot of their efforts and invested funds from City of Paterson totaling \$3 million and have ongoing funds invested of \$1.5 million of state funds, have a

\$300,000 grant in hand from the American Express Foundation for the Phase I façade improvements/construction that is going on now. In 2004 placed on the National Register and few years later was put on list of “Americas Most Endangered Sites” top 10 list by the National Preservation. Brief history how it became a National Historic Landmark is the highest designation by the nation to bestow. Received an award of \$500,000 from the National Grant for African Sites and is going to Phase II. He is applying for \$200,000 and has applied for additional \$125,000 from the National Trust, which he feels strongly the city will receive. Total project for Phase II is \$825,000. Handed out printouts to show progress of Stadium. Phase I is underway right now and is a \$1.3 million project and should wrap up in the fall. Front of stadium includes 4 ticket booths and entry, large iron gates, cast concrete signs, terra cotta tiles spelling out TICKETS. Phase II is to continue along Maple Street, involves lead paint removal, recoating, parging and concrete repairs of the walls. To fund the larger project of the field and field extension they invested in a business plan and have a \$1 million contract with architects from Trenton, who are ready to draw rest of the construction documents for the project and perform the construction management. He said discussion is underway about ownership and looking into a land swap. Currently owned by Paterson Public Schools and the city is a former tenant of the building with a 50-year lease.

**6:54 to 7:13 Prospect Park** – Danielle Ireland Borough Administrator, Arsalan Gilani, PMP, Consulting Municipal Engineer

- Danielle stated Hofstra Park is their sole recreational oasis and is about 70 acres. Thanked committee for funds for past projects. Last year opened the Pavilion and is being used heavily, as well as the Spray Park. Mr. Gilani discussed the new application for soccer field. He went into depth about discussion with the community and what they wanted. They express real need for soccer and a survey was sent and received feedback that soccer field is needed. Would really like 150 x 300 field, but would have just enough room and grass maintenance would be costly, and turf is too expensive. Scaled back to give them enough ability to move forward and then expand in the future. They decided to do 7 X 7 (players) field and could turn into 11 x 11 field for younger kids. The project would be 100 x 150 synthetic turf field, not much maintenance needed, bleachers, goals, full drainage under estimating cost of \$275,000. This would only be a 1/3 of the field and placed in the center. As they move forward they could add lights, scoreboards, and could add right side and left side panels to expand. Discussion about what would happen to this field if they expand, what would happen to lighting, what would happen to drainage. Committee went back and forth about their cost as it seems low at \$275,000 and is not enough for this scope. Adding additional fields are going to be costly and not going to be easy. Turf fields only good for 8 to 10 years and if they don't do additions early, just wasted life span of that turf, have to change striping, blade portion and everything else. Discussed utility work and how going to expand. Mr. Gilani feels it won't be a problem since lighting not going around the entire field. Jonathan asked what the fill of the field would be; the engineer hasn't really looked into that yet. Discussion broke out about fillers and which is good, safe, eco friendly. Committee stated concerns about how future expansion would work, how it will affect initial project.

**7:21 To 7:33 Ringwood** – Scott Heck, Borough Manager

- Handed out pictures of the project. Thanked us for being gracious with helping of the previous request for a turf field. DEP has not been helpful so they found another location which is Stonetown. There are three (3) different fields there now: Softball, Lacrosse and Soccer. Property is owned by Board of Education as is Hewitt School and they have lease with them and will end in about 2 ½ years and borough is currently talking about renewal. Would like us to transfer or apply the grants in the past (Hewitt Field) to this project, since the borough committed a lot of money. Homeowners around the area concerned about lighting, Mr. Heck said there is so much new technology with lights. He will re-address with the residents, have a public hearing then have to go back to planning board to get approval since in the pass it was denied. This area is 17 acres, has basketball courts, softball, lacrosse, soccer. The new field would set down in between the other 2 fields. This would help eliminate noise to residents in the area and would put in additional buffering if needed. There are no environmental constraints that they know of. He discussed briefly environmental concerns; they are going with the organic material. Total estimate of \$1.6 million, they funded \$900,000. Mentioned we were kind enough to fund \$450,000 over a three-year period. Ringwood provides water to many municipalities; they don't have ability like the other towns, such as ratables, or fund raising since little to no commercial or industrial development. Discussion from committee about size of field, drainage, parking. Field would be striped for four (4) different sports. Drainage: there will be some type of drainage basin, they have parking which is grass and gravel but going to stripe to elevate some of the parking. Ended by saying this is their last option, because if you are in Highlands Preservation Area you can only build on school property and not municipal property.

**7:34 to 7:45** - Mike Cassidy, Director of Planning and Real Estate and Robert Guarasci, founder/CEO of NJCDC

- Mike started by saying 2016 they received a design grant to help them commence process of improvements. Last year denied application, so they took our committee concerns, which was to get more community input and progress the drawings and have an agreement with the City of Paterson. They reached out to the community, held meetings, community had one-on-one with the landscape architect, who specializes in crime prevention by an environmental design attended. Discovered at a meeting that School # 2 (about 2 blocks from park), which is for children with Special Needs, and there are no playgrounds in Paterson for Special Needs children. Crime prevention analysis puts in lighting, security, but you also need to put back something that would create use. So now they want to put in playground for special needs, by having sensory equipment and facility even the other children can use. Design is almost complete and were grateful for funding to allow them to have design done. Plans are complete, also have drafted a maintenance agreement with the City. Freeholder asked what the details of the agreement. Robert said major maintenance, heavy equipment would be the City's responsibility; NJCDC would be day-to-day upkeep to ensure it is clean and would do this with youth volunteers. They will also bring different events and activities to keep the park alive, which is another of their obligations. Question asked if they have an agreement with council, yes they have a resolution supporting the project and authorizing completing the maintenance agreement. Question of other funding they are reaching out to. TD Bank and they are 1 of 8 finalists for \$3 million in various grants that they will be awarding. They have asked for \$300,000 and Robert feels they will receive this amount from a call he received this afternoon, if not \$200,000. He met yesterday with the acting Mayor to see if there were CDBG dollars they are willing to dedicate to

this project and she said yes. They are asking for \$150,000 from Open Space. Freeholder asked what the timeline was, Mike said they are at 85% complete and Robert feels the fall next year. Robert said if we are inclined to make the award (late summer), early fall then within year from that would be ribbon cutting.

**Public Portion:** 7:46 Kathleen Caren called for a motion to open, Alice Szepletowski second. Seeing no one from public Kathleen Caren called for motion to close and Maria Flynn second to close.

### **Deliberations**

Matt, the staff, and Freeholder met and came up with the spreadsheet for discussion to finalize recommendations to allocate the funds. Committee reviewed the spreadsheet, Freeholder suggested to change the Paterson funding and extract \$25,000 from Hinchcliffe and \$25,000 from Van Houten and put \$50,000 to Lou Costello Park. His thinking is we have already invested in the planning documents and we already have money in the project. If the project doesn't move forward we just wasted the funds, they've made a lot of progress with the Paterson administration, we need to show ongoing support to help them get private funds to move this project forward. Kathleen suggested taking \$50,000 from Louis Street since we can't fully fund. Kelly said the Historic dollar amounts are set and best to keep. So agreed to \$50,000 from Louis St. and add to Lou Costello. Discussion about Skylar Colfax House, Madison/Hope Plaza, Weis Ecology Center, Friends of Wallisch Barn & Porch, Totowa PAL, Roe Street in Haledon. Committee felt there is only so much money for open space. Freeholder asked about process for committee comments to grants approved. Kathleen said once the recommendations are approved by the Freeholders, then John Pogorelec would get specific in the agreement. She said there are award letters and presentations, and she could put all that in there. Bernie asked for a motion to accept the numbers that are before us, Maria motioned, Alice second, everyone voted in favor.

**Adjourned:** 8:18 motion by Kathleen Caren, seconded by Maria Flynn.

Respectfully submitted,

Maria Flynn, Secretary