

Passaic County Open Space, Farmland and Historic Preservation Trust Fund Advisory Committee Meeting - Minutes from May 24, 2018

Public Notice: 6:32 p.m. read by Kathleen Caren

Called to Order / Flag Salute: 6:33 p.m. by Vice Chair – Bernie Vroom

Visual Roll Call – Members Present: Freeholder Assad Akhter, Matthew P. Jordan (Deputy County Administrator), Kathleen M. Caren (County Open Space Coordinator), Chair - Sandy Lawson (Wanaque), Vice Chair - Bernie Vroom (Bloomingtondale), Secretary - Maria Flynn (Woodland Park), Alice Szepietowski (Clifton), Bhupendra V. Gadhavi (Wayne), Jonathan Pera (Engineering Dept.), John D. Pogorelc, Jr., Esq. (Assistant County Counsel), Jan Northrup for Darryl Sparta (Parks Dept. Director), Angela Fields (Paterson), Al Abdelaziz (Paterson), Steven Orsini (North Haledon), Anne Kahwaty (Little Falls)

Absent: Maria Elena Grant (West Milford), Isabel Agudelo (Passaic), Kelly Ruffel (County Cultural and Historic Affairs), Amy Jolin (Ringwood), Cindy Frank (Hawthorne),

Public Portion: 6:33 p.m. Bernie Vroom called for a motion to open and close since no one from the public was present. Kathleen Caren motioned to open and Bhupendra V. Gadhavi seconded, Maria Flynn motioned to close and Bhupendra V. Gadhavi seconded.

Meeting Minutes: 6:34 p.m. Alice Szepietowski had question on date then realized was okay so Maria Flynn motioned to accept minutes from April 26, 2018 and Bhupendra V. Gadhavi seconded. All voted Yes except Matthew P. Jordan and Jan Northrup, who abstained.

Old Business:

- Kathleen presented May 17th site visit of certain Open Space applications.
 - **Wayne - Veterans Alliance Park:** Grant request is for an outdoor shelter, landscape, walkways. Grant request amount was amended from \$135,000 to \$68,500 as the municipality has matched \$62,000. This is the 3rd priority out of three (3) applications. Wayne Hills Auxiliary Field is 1st priority and Friends and Family Park - Expand Parking is the 2nd priority and we did not go see on this trip.
 - **Wanaque - Lakeside Park:** Grant request is for new playground equipment; basketball courts rehab, benches/picnic tables, and fencing. Town wants to get rid of old fencing, there is also a drainage issue so talking about putting in pervious paving. This is a quiet neighbor and Bernie Vroom mentioned it is the main entrance to Lake Iosco. Borough is asking for \$120,000 and total amount needed is \$151,700.
 - **North Haledon - High Mountain Playground:** Grant request is for poured-in-place surface and is adjacent to the school. Borough had swapped this BOE property with another piece of property that was borough owned. Also want to fix

gate (put in a sliding gate). Asking for \$150,000 and project amount needed is \$160,600.

- **Prospect Park - Hofstra Park:** Grant request is to turn existing baseball field into a soccer field. Borough would like to put in a synthetic field and only looking for a 5-versus-5 player soccer field (young children). Borough is asking for \$150,000 and total project amount needed is \$275,000 (with matching funds to be determined). Matt Jordan asked Jonathan Pera if the amount is realistic. Jonathan said the field is small, about 8,000 square feet. Discussion by committee about size and cost. Jonathan said he would run numbers to see if the amounts are truly realistic. Bernie said it is small, Al Abedlaziz said regulation is 120 x 80 and for high school 100 x 67. Kathleen was told not a lot of children play baseball so they want to put in small soccer field and if the program grows down the road, then they would see if field needs to be bigger. Discussion by committee about the possibility of them wanting to make it bigger in future and could funding be wasted redoing the field? Jonathan said if they put in concrete curbing around field to hold surface in place, then that would have to be taken out and redone if made bigger. Freeholder Assad Akhter said perhaps they should just wait to build and do this in phases so the project is done just once. Kathleen said they also don't know where the matching funds are coming from.
- **Passaic - Third Ward:** (1st priority) The municipality installed a synthetic ice rink last winter which was very popular, News 12 came, the kids were getting along and having fun. They did some research and can install an Ice Rink for use in November – April and at same site, install a Spray Park and use June – September. The grant would include landscaping and \$20,000 of it is identified for surveillance equipment, would we consider it? Kathleen mentioned they are looking for full funding of \$495,800. Next, there was discussion by committee about grants for surveillance equipment. Matt mentioned that in previous rounds they would not be eligible for a grant while the big project (Dundee Island) is in process until the project was completed, but with new rules they are now eligible to apply. Bernie said City of Newark had received other grants for surveillance equipment and there may be other grant funds out there for this (Homeland Security). Al said surveillance equipment is good for parks to help monitor activity. Kathleen said historically we have not funded security cameras and believes there are other sources out there.
- **Passaic - Armory Park Dog Park Project:** (2nd priority) Grant funds would be used to put artificial turf and drainage, the field is pretty good size pocket park. There are squatters living in the woods (on NJDOT property, behind this park), mayor said he is working with DOT to lease. City wants to beautify and make safer because this is a non-residential area, also stated they will only use a portion of the property for this dog park project. Committee throwing around “does it make sense to put in artificial turf, where is it going to drain into?” Al said he has seen it done. Request is for full funding: \$187,350.

- **Passaic - Madison & Hope Plaza Improvement** (3rd priority) Grant funds would turn this into a true plaza. (Religious group used to use and charge people - apparently there was a magical tree stump once located there). Mayor's idea is to repopulate the area by putting in tables and chairs, benches, landscaping, and also utilize the adjacent road area for food truck events. Committee discussion back and forth about exactly where property is located, it is by Rt. 21 and the overpass. City is also looking into engage local artists and children to paint murals on the walls, perhaps with role models to inspire the little children. Asking for full funding: \$10,608. Freeholder Akhter had questions that if city owned, and is this really considered open space? Committee had discussion back and forth that it is a form of passive recreation (area is akin to a pocket park).
- **Clifton - Zelenka Park**: This is 2nd priority and Athenia Park is their 1st priority. Kathleen stated they have a lot of unexpended funds from previous grants for Athenia Park. Zelenka Park hosts football, lacrosse and soccer, and fields need attention. This is located by a neighborhood restaurant (which takes up a lot of on-street parking) and they believe they need a small parking lot for the park users (next to Field House). City is looking to turn a small portion of the park into parking, upgrade lights, irrigation, bleachers, and playground. Asking for \$250,000 and total project amount needed is \$500,000.
- **City Green - Farm Eco-Center Improvements**: This previously funded facility needs new greenhouse plastic, as it is about 7 to 8 years old (and the life of it is 5 years). Grant request would also put in lighting in parking lot because there is none. The farm stand (funded in 2017) hasn't been installed yet but they would like to have water and solar installed in this area. They also need shading for the learning center. Asking for full funding of \$54,000. Kathleen reminded the committee to keep in mind they have a lot of volunteers as well, and do a lot of fundraising (could consider that as their matching contribution).
- **Little Falls – Louis Ave Field**: Grant request would be used to eliminate the basketball court, install new fence and lighting, and expand/shift field. (After site visit, Greg Moore, who lives in the area, had said he didn't think the neighbors would be in favor of nighttime lighting.) Discussion by committee about how this Blue Acres-funded area will affect the project, were told just part of the road (vacated) and across (closer to river) was funded by state Blue Acres program. Asking for full funding of \$688,800. Then Maria asked "Don't they have a local open space trust fund?" Kathleen said yes but had been told they don't have a mechanism to draw down funding.
- Those were all the sites visited.
- Kathleen then asked which applicants should we have come in to present and went through the list. Committee decided on the following projects below after brief discussion as we went down the list.

1. **Clifton for Zelenka Park** and to ask why they are not drawing down funds on Athenia Park.
2. **Little Falls** to see why not phasing and to see what status is with their open space funding.
3. **Passaic** for all three projects
4. **Prospect Park:** committee has a lot of questions about this soccer field especially once put in, can it really be expanded afterwards without taking out everything out?
5. **Ringwood** because Hewitt Field is not going forward due to too many issues. Essentially seeking to have those previous grant funds reallocated for the Stonetown project.
6. **Wanaque** is being invited to observe but not to present (project is straight-forward).
7. **Two Paterson** historic preservation applications (**Hinchliffe** and **Van Houten House**)
8. **NJCDC** see if they obtained agreement to manage Lou Costello Park.

Kathleen told committee not sure who Kelly Ruffel wanted to bring in to present (for Historic Preservation applications) but we all agree to bring in Paterson.

- Discussion about the dates for presentation because there seems to be issue with current dates. June 13 seem liked a good date and all agree to do in one night and start earlier at 5:30 p.m. Kathleen will follow up with committee via email with this new date.
- Kathleen handed out Kelly's Historic Preservation List and committee discussed briefly. Kathleen explained that Kelly stated the ones in yellow are not eligible for grants. Bernie why are we entertaining Carriage Barn Roof, when it is own by the State and this isn't the first time brought to committee and we didn't fund before. Matt said the rules do qualify it but technically not saying we must recommend. Bernie said we should at least be last on the list not the first. Decided to put on list to determine if we fund or not fund.
- Bhupendra asked how the rules/bylaws committee going and Sandy said they haven't met yet. Matt stated after this round.

New Business:

- Matt Jordan said roughly six (6) acres of open space adjacent to Pompton Aquatic Park (in Pompton Lakes and Wayne) is in process of being acquired, with closing by John D. Pogorelc, Jr., Esq.; funding is from Green Acres and Capital. Kathleen commented that the property is in Wayne on Hamburg Turnpike at corner of Dawes Highway across from the Quik Chek. This will give the Pompton Aquatic Park frontage and a face on Hamburg Turnpike. John D. Pogorelec, Jr., Esq. said the County needs 90-days for due diligence (environmental reports, title work), so still waiting on outcome and that is only

wrinkle with County Counsel's office. Bernie Vroom mentioned this is just informational and no funding is coming from County Open Space Trust Fund.

Coordinator's Report: Kathleen said the Unexpended Grants Report was given to everyone and most of them are being drawn down in timely fashion, except Clifton (Athenia Park).

Correspondence: Letter and petition from neighbors of Lou Costello Park that they are objecting because they were not contacted or invited to public outreach meetings. Kathleen had been told that NJCDC had three (3) public meetings but no one from County was invited even though we had asked (last summer) to be notified of them. She also said she only saw the concept plan and there is still a fairly large remaining balance (over \$30,000 of the original \$50,000) that has not been drawn down from this 2016 award. When Kathleen and others from the County met with NJCDC several weeks earlier, they were apologetic about invites, and she did finally receive results of their survey, meeting attendance sheets but that it doesn't appear to be anyone from the immediate neighborhood (rather, other non-profit organizations within Paterson). Bernie suggested we should amend the rules to have non-profits (like municipalities) being subject to showing proof of notice being sent for projects that fall in with the municipalities. Maria said the West Paterson Boys and Girls Club had letters sent but the borough sent them because the property is owned by both. The expense was borne by the borough and *not* the club (because they are a small non-profit group with limited funds).

With no further business to address, the committee **adjourned** at approximately 7:40 p.m., with a motion by Bhupendra V. Gadhavi, seconded by Freeholder Assad Akhter.

Respectfully submitted,

Maria Flynn

Secretary