

Franklin Township Open Space Advisory Committee Minutes
Wednesday, February 13, 2008

1. **Call to order in accordance with the Sunshine Law provision.** At 7:30 a quorum was present and Chairman Jones called the meeting to order in accordance with the Sunshine Law.
2. **Introductions/roll call.** Present were members Connolly, Connell, LaCorte, Battin, Jones, Triggs and Schmidt. Also present was Consultant Loos. Arriving later was Moon.
3. **Financial Report.** Loos reported that there is \$24,205,745.31 in the OSTF. Loos also reported that he had recently met the new finance director, Ross Bobal, and discussed the need of the OSAC to have accurate and timely financial information. Mr. Bobal expressed his support for same. LaCorte moved and Connolly moved to approve the financial report. Motion carried.
4. **Opening of the meeting to the public.** A motion, made by LaCorte and seconded by Triggs, was passed to open the meeting to the public. Seeing no members of the public present, LaCorte moved and Connolly seconded a motion to close the meeting to the public. Motion carried.
5. **Consultant's report.** The committee reviewed the January consultant's report and Loos added that, in addition to the information provided in the written report, the following projects were also worked on: realignment of the Leni trail; clean up of the Scalzone Natural Area; request for clean up of the Negri-Nepote forest; and closing on the Lake and Suydam properties.
6. **Reforestation of a portion of the Bunker Hill Natural Area.** The committee reviewed the attached memo, "Reforestation of portion of the Bunker Hill Natural Area" and after some discussion, Schmidt moved and Battin seconded a motion to proceed with the plan. Motion carried.
--Around this point, John Moon arrived.
7. **Vacancy on the OSAC.** Jones reported that there is no current vacancy on the OSAC. However, there may be a vacancy in the future. If anyone knows of anyone interested in serving on the OSAC, they should be advised to forward their resumes to Loos. Loos will ask the Township Clerk for copies of any applications to serve on the OSAC that she might have.
8. **Equestrian fees.** Moon inquired about the issue of equestrian fees and it was reported that only three were issued in 2007.
9. **Eco-tourism.** Connell inquired about whether or not the township has any statistics on eco-tourism. No one knew of any. Chase suggested that trails maps be placed on the township website. Loos will follow up on this. It was also asked how many people "hit" the Township website each year. Loos will attempt to find out.
10. **Gunther property.** Loos reported that George Manioudakis submitted the only bid for the 50 tillable acres on the Gunther farm and the bid was for \$16.20 per acre.
11. **OSAC representative to serve on the Trails Advisory Committee.** Jack Connolly volunteered to serve on the TAC. Loos will notify the Clerk and make sure that Connolly is notified of meetings.

- 12. Township lots at end of Westpoint Avenue, near Hamilton Street.** The committee discussed the lots owned by the Township and other nearby lots owned by Mr. Latanzio. The committee asked Loos to prepare a map of this area and to provide it for next month's OSAC meeting for further discussion.
- 13. Somerset County Municipal Partnership grant for 2008.** The committee discussed the need to apply for another County grant. After some discussion, LaCorte moved and Connolly seconded a motion to recommend to that the Township apply again for the Scalzone property. Motion carried.
- 14. NJ's 12th Annual Land Conservation Rally on March 8.** Jones recommended that the members consider attending this event.
- 15. Reallocation of money in the 2007 Historic Grant (Meadows Foundation).** The committee reviewed a request from the Meadows Foundation to re-appropriate an unspent \$3,673.10 from the 2005 historic grant (Wyckoff-Garretson) to cover propane tank installation at the Wyckoff-Garretson property. The background on this was explained as follows:

In 2007, the Meadows Foundation was granted a \$29,750 historic grant to install an HVAC system in the Wyckoff-Garretson (W-G) house. In doing the installation, they incurred additional costs of \$4,164.50 to install a propane tank for which they do not have the money. However, in 2005, the Meadows was also granted a \$29,680 grant for repair of the exterior of the W-G house. Fortunately, the County of Somerset also gave the Meadows money that ended up being used toward that same project. As a result of that County grant, the Meadows has not spent \$3,673.10 from that 2005 grant. They are now requesting that the OSAC consider re-appropriating that \$3,673.10 to the propane tank installation.

Schmidt moved and Chase seconded a motion to recommend to the Township that the \$3,673.10 that was unspent in the 2005 grant be reallocated to the propane tank installation project. Motion carried unanimously.

- 16. Historic grant program for FY 2008.** The committee reviewed the historic grant program for 2007 and suggested several changes be made to the program for FY 2008. Chief among them was done through a motion made by LaCorte and seconded by Schmidt such that the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) act on the OSAC's behalf to review the grant applications and to make a recommendation to the Township Council on the amount of funding that any applicant would receive. Motion carried. The committee then made numerous other suggested changes to the program and Loos will make those changes to the document and the committee will review these at the March meeting.
- 17. ATVs on open space.** Chase advised the committee of a bill, A-823, that would prohibit ATVs on preserved land and that also would require registration and tagging of ATVs. Loos will obtain a copy of the bill and provide it to the committee for review at their next meeting.
- 18. Opening of the meeting to the public.** A motion, made by Connolly and seconded by LaCorte, was passed to open the meeting to the public. Seeing no

members of the public present, LaCorte moved and Connolly seconded a motion to close the meeting to the public. Motion carried.

19. Executive Session. Around 9:45, the committee went into Executive Session to discuss negotiations and possible purchase of property. At 10:00 the committee came out of Executive Session.

20. Eagle Scout projects. Loos suggested two more Eagle Scout projects be added to the list of potential projects: A kiosk at Catalpa at the corner of Old Vliet and So. Middlebush Roads; and a video of open space properties that could be shown on the Township FTTV-25 and on the website. All supported pursuing these.

21. Adjournment. At 10:00 PM the OSAC adjourned, upon a motion by Connolly, seconded by Triggs, that carried.

Respectfully submitted,

***John Loos
Secretary/Consultant***

Reforestation of portion of the Bunker Hill Natural Area

To: OSAC

From: John Loos

Date: Feb. 13, 2008

RE: Reforestation proposal, Bunker Hill Natural Area

At the January OSAC meeting, two representatives of the NRCS (Chris Smith and Greg Westfall) presented a forestation plan to the committee. This was a follow-up to a meeting that Tom Zilinek and I had with these representatives in December. The following is a summary of the proposal and includes a methodology for implementing it.

The plan is to have a forestation demonstration project on approximately six acres of the southernmost field, closes to the parking lot and entrance to the parcel. The demonstration would be something like the following:

1. Approximately two acres would be planted with approximately 550 trees per acre (1100 trees total). These two acres would have a barrier around them in order to discourage deer from entering and browsing. It is suggested that the Township utilize discarded x-mas trees¹, arranged such that the deer would be discouraged from entering. This would demonstrate a field being reforested with some protection from deer browse.
2. Approximately two acres would be planted with approximately 550 trees per acre (1100 trees total). These two acres would not have a barrier around them and deer could freely browse. This would demonstrate a field being reforested with no protection from deer browse.
3. Approximately two acres would not be planted with any trees and would not have a barrier around them and deer could freely browse. This would demonstrate a field going into succession with no management.

Prior to planting any trees, the fields would be "pillowed" or furrowed by taking a piece of public works equipment into the field and randomly roughing up the field. This would be done to attempt to mimic the way the field likely was prior to previous farming practices leveling the field. The Township Engineer has indicated that the furrowing could be done by Township Public Works staff who would need training in equipment use.

¹ The Township Engineer has indicated that the Township already spends money picking up discarded trees in the southern portion of the Township and transports them to the mini-dump where they are mulched. He expects that discarding some at the Bunker Hill Natural Area would actually save the Township money.

It is my opinion that volunteers could be obtained to plant the trees. Several possible sources of volunteers include:

1. Getting a Scout troop to take this on as a troop project.
2. Getting an Eagle Scout candidate to take this on as an Eagle Scout project;
3. Getting a corporation to take this on as a community service project; or
4. Getting the volunteers from the United Way to supply volunteers. (The Township utilized this successfully, several years ago.)

In view of the above, the cost of implementing this project is anticipated to be:

1. Pillowing the fields: Several hours of work by Township Public works employees. Township views this expense as a training opportunity and cost would not be charged to Open Space Trust Fund (OSTF).
2. Creating barrier utilizing x-mas tress. Township would do this as part of their regular x-mas tree pick up operation, thus no charge OSTF.
3. Purchase of 2200 trees²: Cost is estimated by NRCS to be about \$20 per 100 trees, so total cost for 2200 trees is estimated to be \$440.
4. Planting the trees: To be done by volunteers. Cost to the Township would be cost of organizing the volunteers. If done by scouts, very little cost to supervise—basically one site visit to explain the project and a final inspection. If done through the United Way or through a corporation, then likely would need to have someone on-site during the planting operation—probably one day.

² The NRCS's Tree Planting Standard shows that between 400 plants per acre (hardwoods) and 600 plants per acre (conifer) should be planted. Since NRCS have suggested a mix of both conifers and hardwoods, I am assuming a planting rate of 500 to 550 plants per acre. Information on prices of trees can found at the New Jersey State Tree Nursery website:

http://www.state.nj.us/dep/parksandforests/forest/njfs_seedling_nursery.html This information (on pages 2,3) indicates that hardwoods would be \$20 per hundred and conifers would be between \$15 (one year old seedlings) and \$20 (two year old seedlings) per hundred. I am assuming \$20 per hundred. Based on the above information on planting rate and current state nursery costs, the tree costs would run approximately \$110 per acre (assumed \$20 per hundred seedlings by 550 trees per acre).