

FRANKLIN TOWNSHIP TRAILS COMMITTEE, February 13, 2019
(Joint meeting with the Franklin Township Open Space Committee)

TAC Attendees: Mark Fortin; Vanessa Jones; James Kuligowski; Anne-Marie Orlusky; Charles Martin; Tom Lewis; P. Kramer, Township Council Representative; Tara Kenyon (Land Management and Open Space Consultant); Cleo Karanikolas (intern). All committee members were present.

Note that the trails committee currently has (2) vacancies, with 9 positions total.

Public Attendees – public attendees included John Loos, D&R Canal Commission, and 3 representatives of the Franklin Township Baseball League.

1. Call to Order in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act (N.J.S.A. 10:4-6). Meeting called to order 7:01 PM by Randy Jones, Chair Open Space Committee

2. **Roll Call - Open Space** - Melba Batten, Theo McGyver, Bill Connell, Robert Vornlocker, Randy Jones, Norris, Theodore Chase, Tara Kenyon, Robert McCourt, John Moon, Robert Puskas, Arnold Schmidt, Dave Triggs, John Herrling (Liason to Trails Committee), Chris Williams (absent), Phillip Kramer, Cleo Karanikolas, Robert LaCorte, Alice Sipowitz (absent).

3. Public Comment The meeting was opened to the Public to provide time for comments and/or questions related to the agenda. All public attendees had business on the meeting agenda, there were no public comments at this time.

4. Approval of Meeting Minutes – January 2018, Vanessa Jones moved that the Trails Committee minutes be approved, and Anne-Marie Orlusky seconded the motion. Minutes were approved by a unanimous vote of the committee.

5. Financial Report – Open space budget was discussed by the full committee. The report posted for January was a budget report for the year 2019. The beginning balance was \$5,098,951. Manager Vornlocker indicated that this amount was simply the projected revenue collection for the year. He indicated that the total accumulated balance in the Open Space Fund will be posted in the 2018 accounting. This was not completed at the time of the meeting, but that the amount would be on the order of \$15,000,000. Several committee members raised questions about the scope of some items in the report relating to equipment repair, maintenance, etc. Mr. Vornlocker indicated that amounts of these items presented in the budget were only those associated with open space properties and that they were only a small portion of the total public works budget.

6. New Business

- a. **Baseball Field Lighting Project** – Representatives of the Franklin Township Baseball League - President, Chuck Turano, Vice President, Peter Mellilo, and John Brewer (member, Board of Directors) - presented a request for funding for lighting equipment and installation. The League currently has 2 fields with lighting and was asking for financial help for the addition of an LED light system to their large field. This field is used for older kids who would be playing after dark. Representatives indicated that the League wants to be on a par with other towns that have lighted fields. They indicated that the lighting system represents the latest LED technology which provides less light spillage, reduced maintenance and electricity consumption.

Questions from the committee concerned the cost of acquisition and installation of the LED system (proposed to be about \$250,000) and the potential for cost overruns of a completed project. After further discussion the committee asked to recommend to the Township council that no more than \$250,000 be allocated from the Open Space fund for this project. At the end of the presentation, Mr. Vornlocker noted that this allocation would increase the amount of open space money allotted to the baseball facility to approximately \$1,000,000 over the past 3 years.

- b. **Request for support of a pedestrian bridge across the D&R canal at the intersection of Easton Avenue and JFK Boulevard.** John Loos, Acting Chair of the D&R Canal Commission made a presentation requesting funds for the purpose of installing a pedestrian footbridge across the canal on a small parcel of land adjacent to the Somerset Diner. The land would be donated by the Diner along with 2 designated parking spaces in the parking lot at the rear of the building. The cost of the bridge and improvements are thought to be about \$600,000. The commission has approximately \$100,000 for project obtained from PSEG. The project is currently thought to need an additional \$500,000. After an extended discussion, Chairman Randy Jones entertained a motion from Bill Connell requesting that staff members approach the Somerset County Open Space committee to seek a partnership with the township on this project. This motion was approved by a majority of the members of the joint committee with two apparent abstentions.

c. **Mobility Path Plan and Policy – Scooters, Bike Share, Etc.**

Randy Jones requested discussion from the committee concerning the designation of specific areas on township trails for bicycles, electric wheels. Manager Vornlocker questioned whether it can be made legal to for these vehicles to operate on township trails and whether certain trails should be delegated as mobile accessible. Discussion continued concerning bike sharing within the township. It was noted that the Hamilton Street organization is working with developers of student off-campus housing on the idea of creating bike shares (and bike lanes) in the area. No actions were taken concerning the topic under discussion.

d. **Request for landscaping.** Mayor Kramer raised a request that wildflowers be seeded on the exposed cut below the PSEG transmission lines that cross the canal and the Millstone river. This matter was referred to the Open Space Consultant for further inquiry concerning suitable types of planting and the availability of outside funding sources for the project.

e. **Request for memorial naming** Mayor Kramer requested that the Committee examine the policy for naming Parks, Trails, Facilities, etc. within the township specifically, for the purpose of naming some township facility for recently deceased former mayor John Clyde. Manager Vornlocker indicated that current policy is that no facility within the township should be named for a living person. After discussion a motion was unanimously passed requesting that the Council rename the Griggstown Grasslands as the John Clyde Memorial Grasslands. This was felt to be appropriate, given Mr. Clyde's long service to the township and that Griggstown Grasslands is also the site of the John Clyde Junior Memorial Trail. The trail is named for Mr. Clyde's deceased son, who, as an Eagle Scout, established a woodland trail in the Griggstown open space area.

f. **Trail reports** were given by all trails committee members. Vanessa Jones indicated that fence rails were missing at the Bunker Hill Road parking lot and that recently cut tree stumps might be used as

natural benches on that trail area. Vanessa Jones also indicated that MAGA graffiti has been observed on some of the 6 Mile Run trails. Mt. Vornlocker noted that the camera has now been installed at the Griggstown Trail parking lot. This is a high-resolution camera that is capable of panning and tilting to view the parking lot, but also broad areas of the adjacent grasslands.

Charles Martin brought up questions concerning inquiries from deer hunters on the Butler Road North (Purple) Trail about the possibility of allowing permitted hunters to park on Suydam Road in order to bring out harvested deer to the road through township land that is leased to local farmers. The hunters also requested clarification on hunting restrictions in northwest part of the Butler Road Purple Trail area, west of 10 Mile Run stream. These matters were deferred for further inquiry.

Open Space Committee moved to executive session at 9:30 PM. At that time the trails committee portion of the meeting was adjourned.