

Open Space Board Meeting – OPEN SESSION

Tuesday, January 24th, 2017 – 10:00 am

Freeholders Meeting Room, County Administration Building

4 Moore Road, Cape May Court House, New Jersey

Board Member Attendance: David Clemans
Neil Byrne
David Craig
Peter Lomax
Freeholder Will Morey
Leslie Gimeno

Others In Attendance: Barbara Ernst
Others as listed on Sign in Sheet

Call to Order: Mr. Lomax called the meeting to order at 10:02.

Pledge of Allegiance: Mr. Lomax led the Pledge of Allegiance

Open Public Meetings Act: The Open Public Meetings Act Statement was read by Mr. Lomax.

Minutes: The minutes of September 27th were approved by a motion by Mr. Craig, seconded by Mr. Byrne, with Ms. Gimeno being in favor. Freeholder Morey and Mr. Lomax abstained.

Roll Call: Dave Clemans, Neil Byrne, Dave Craig, Peter Lomax, Freeholder Will Morey, Leslie Gimeno

Approval of Minutes: Mr. Lomax said that the meeting minutes from November 30th were on the table for approval. He reminded the Board that the focus of the meeting was to inform the Board regarding Artificial Turf systems, and that Mr. Dan Guzzi had been the guest speaker. Mr. Craig made a motion to approve the minutes as written; Mr. Byrne seconded the motion. All in favor.

Chairman's Report: Mr. Lomax indicated that December had been the last funding round for the Special Funding Round for bicycle-related projects. He said that out of the 16 municipalities in the county, 6 provided applications. He stated that while this could appear to be a low percentage, it was important to keep in mind that: 1) Cape May Point and Cape May had a grant-funded study and were addressing issues through that process; 2) Borough of Woodbine had an extensive existing bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure; 3) Lower Township had a large project approved and construction was planned for the near term; and 4) North Wildwood had a system in place. Mr. Lomax said that these activities, when paired with the projects funded through the Special Funding round, demonstrated that the effort to establish a regional system was well underway, and that support via the Open Space Program would continue to be provided to advance the regional project.

Mr. Lomax indicated that the Special Funding Round focus for 2017 would be Coastal Recreational Enhancements. Funding opportunities would be offered in the second and third funding rounds of 2017 (deadlines in August and December). One of the key goals in the project is to facilitate public access to coastal areas, and to enhance ecotourism activities. He said that a Stakeholder meeting would be held in April, with a design firm being on hand to help with a unified aesthetic that includes branding and signage.

Director's Report: Mrs. Ernst said that closing on four Land Acquisition projects had occurred in December. The projects were: Deeney (associated with Cape May County Park Zoo); Brown (Cape May Point); PII (Wildwood); and Stagliano/Sayco (West Wildwood). Mrs. Ernst said that closing on the Axelsson property in Middle Township would occur in the next week. Mr. Lomax thanked Mrs. Ernst for all of her hard work that led to the inclusion of these properties in the Open Space Inventory.

Financial Report: Ms. Gimeno gave an overview of the Financial Report, which reflected a fund balance of \$12.3 million after all approved and recommended projects were taken into account.

Correspondence:

- 1) Letter From Historic Cold Spring Village dated 12/12/16 asking for an extension to 5/22/17 for their funded painting project due to weather related issues
- 2) Letter from Richard Hluchan of Hyland Levin regarding St. Mary's by the Sea Retreat House in Cape May Point indicating that the parish is intending to sell the property and is seeking to understand the level of interest by the Open Space Program
- 3) Email from February 2005, forwarded by the Nature Conservancy, with information on property of potential interest in Lower Township.

Presentations:

Mr. Lomax stated that representatives from Upper Township were unable to attend the meeting due to illness, therefore their agenda item would be postponed to the March meeting.

SF 16-08 - Wildwood Crest – Beach Bike Path

Ms. Connie Mahon introduced herself and Mr. Steven Morey on behalf of the Borough of Wildwood Crest. She stated that the Borough was seeking funding for a 16' wide beach bike path, and that the Borough was advanced in the planning process, having recently met with the NJDEP. Ms. Mahon said that the Borough prided itself on its family-friendly environment, and that the current project would complement Borough amenities. She indicated that the proposal would implement a bicycle path loop system with connectivity to adjoining municipalities and would help to improve circulation and alleviate congestion in the area. Ms. Mahon said that recent meetings with permitting agencies including the US Army Corps of Engineers included discussion of realigning an area of the USACOE dune project to accommodate the bike path project and that she was optimistic that the request would be accommodated. She stated that the beach was over 1,000 feet wide at the area in question.

Ms. Mahon said that the Borough was coordinating with the USACOE on the specifications of five handicapped ramps that would allow East-West access from the beach to the side streets, and that the Borough had received a grant from the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs in the amount of \$270,000 for the handicapped access ramps. She said that these ramps would be tied into access for the bicycle path, with connectivity to community assets such as the Taylor Park and the Beach Pier.

Ms. Mahon stated that the proposal also involved a rest stop and shade structure. Bollard lighting was also proposed for the existing path segment to provide enhanced safety and aesthetics. According to Ms. Mahon, having had the meeting in Trenton with permitting agencies, the Borough is fully confident that a CAFRA permit would be possible once the full application was submitted. In response to a question from Board members, Ms. Mahon said that the USACOE plans were 30% completed and were sent back to their design groups for consideration of local government comments.

Mr. Craig asked about the expected lifespan of the path, and Mr. Morey said that with the I-5 base, the path is not expected to settle. Ms. Mahon added that the City of North Wildwood has an existing beach bike path, so that the precedent has been set. She explained that the path not be open to vehicular traffic, with the exception of emergency vehicles. Plans for West-East emergency cross-overs were also being accounted for.

When asked about the facility's proposed open hours, Ms. Mahon said that the proposed path would be available 24/7, which is consistent with NJ Green Acres Program requirements. When asked about the proposed pavilion, Ms. Mahon said that the site had been selected, but that permitting and design considerations were still being addressed.

Freeholder Morey asked about the design for the proposed restroom. Mr. Morey responded that the plans involved a temporary seasonal restroom that would be custom-built and aesthetically pleasing. In matters related to bicycle traffic circulation, Ms. Mahon stated that the project would result in less conflicts between bicycles and pedestrians and included traffic calming measures including a

roundabout. She said that the new path would result in a bicycle path circulation pattern that engaged key community assets, including connectivity to the US Fish & Wildlife Refuge located immediately south of the Borough.

The Borough indicated that they were actively engaged in working with the USACOE on the dune project and that the Bike path project may need adjustments based on the final design. Ms. Mahon said that the cost of the CAFRA project was included in the municipal budget.

With no further questions, Ms. Mahon and Mr. Morey were thanked for their presentations.

SF 16-06: City of Wildwood: Beach Bike Path

Mayor Troiano introduced himself and Marc DeBlasio, Engineer, thanked the Board for the opportunity to present the City's Beach Bike Path project. He said that it is a revised version of the path that had been submitted in a previous application to the Program. The City has been working with the USCOE for alternative ideas with regard to the shore protection project which also is being coordinated with a \$12.3 million grant to alleviate funding on Pacific Avenue via adding a pump station and modifications to stormwater outfall pipes. The City is working with the USCOE to determine appropriate shore protection infrastructure (dune or bulkhead) and the placement of the selected alternative.

The present proposal involves the construction of a 16' wide, approximately 1.5 mile long concrete bike path, the same as the Wildwood Crest proposal. The Mayor indicated that the durability of the path would be 60-70 years. The current design has connectivity with Wildwood Crest's path to the south, and a cul-de-sac at Schellinger Avenue. Connectivity to the Boardwalk and the town would be provided via an access ramp at Lincoln Avenue. Other elements of the proposal include a playground and a water filling station. The total project cost is \$3.1 million, with the City providing a \$200,000 match. The Mayor said that there is a CAFRA permit in hand, but it is for an 8' wide asphalt path; the City is currently in discussion with the NJDEP to see if they will require a permit modification or a new submission. Mr. DeBlasio added that the City would seek the path of least resistance for permitting.

Mr. Craig asked about connectivity of the proposed path to other facilities and community amenities. The Mayor said that there is a 10 pm curfew on the beach and that the USCOE proposal involved reducing the width of the beach, so that he was not sure of the final path placement. He indicated that the City would be fighting the beach reduction and trying to keep as much beach width as they can due to the importance of beach events to the City's economy. He said that the final bike path plan would be based on the USCOE project. The Mayor said that he would understand if the Open Space Board decided to defer the project based on the uncertainties surrounding the USCOE project, but that the City wanted to have the benefit of being considered under the Special Funding Round to recapture 50% of engineering costs.

Mr. Lomax asked about the segregation of vehicular and bike/pedestrian traffic on the proposed path. The Mayor said that the truck route would be cut out, and that the path would be for pike/ped only. Mr. Lomax then asked about vehicular crossings over the path, and the Mayor said that these intersections would be limited, and appropriate signage installed.

Mr. Lomax indicated that the application refers to the project as Phase I; he inquired what Phase II entailed. Mayor Troiano said that the current project ended at Schellinger Avenue with a cul-de-sac. He stated that the hope would be to have Phase II wrap around the piers and connect to North Wildwood, but that there are concerns about the proximity of the path to the ocean. Freeholder Morey said that island-wide connectivity is very important and that he is glad to see that the City is considering alternatives. The Mayor said that the connectivity issue is difficult due to existing land use, but that the City was exploring its options.

Mr. Craig asked about the interaction of beach-goers and bike path users. Mayor Troiano said that there is a natural balance in the use of the beach vs bike path related to weather. Sunny weather means more beach-goers; cloudy weather means more bike path users.

Freeholder Morey asked about the consistency of the proposed path design with the Wildwoods 2015 Vision Plan, as related to overflow parking on the beach adjacent the Convention Center. The Mayor said that alternatives were being evaluated, based on coordination with the USCOE. Mr. Lomax asked about the City's anticipated timeframe for this coordination as well as with NJDEP for permitting issues. Mayor Troiano responded that the City would have a clearer idea of these issues within the next 2 months.

SF 16-07 - Stone Harbor – Bikeway

Miranda Duca, Borough Recreation Director, introduced herself. In response to a question from Mr. Lomax regarding a previously-funded project, Ms. Duca said that the tennis courts were a huge success, and that additional programming was made possible through the implementation of the project. She indicated that the US Tennis Association has sanctioned three tournaments (July, August, and September), and that two additional un-sanctioned tournaments were planned. She indicated that the Support Building for the tennis facility would go out to bid in the Spring.

With regard to the current application, Ms. Duca said that the Borough was seeking to create a new bicycle hub at the 82nd Street complex to the north side of the recreation building which included bicycle racks, air pump, and fixit station. She indicated that there is a plethora of bicycle activity in the area, and that having a dedicated space for cyclists was needed to enhance the area and to reduce conflicts.

She indicated that the proposal also included the installation of bicycle parking at the Borough's 94th Street parking lot, where two parking spaces would be converted to bicycle parking only. She said that this location was beneficial in that it was adjacent the downtown business district at 96th Street and the Water Tower Plaza at 95th Street, which is now used as special events space. She indicated that restrooms and other amenities are located nearby, and that cyclists would be directed to the new bicycle parking area via a signage program.

The application also includes roadway improvements to install 5' wide AASHTO/DOT approved striping on the outside of the travel lanes. Striping would be thermoplastic and reflective. Ms. Duca said that all aspects of the project are ready to go, with quick mobilization. She indicated that the Borough is prepared to go out to bid and that it is anticipated that the project can be completed by Summer 2017.

SF 16-04 - Dennis Township Bicycle/Walk Path, Sled Hill, and Parking

Jack Gibson thanked the Board for the opportunity to present the Township's project for consideration. By way of background, Mr. Lomax said that there had been two pre-application conferences with the Township to discuss different aspects of the project, which entails both the Dennis Township Recreation property and the Kapp property which is owned by the County via the Open Space Program. Mr. Lomax stated that the application seeks to tie the properties together with enhanced amenities.

Mr. Gibson provided an overview of the proposal, which includes a 4/10 mile extension of the bike path, the development of a sled hill, a 20- space parking lot on the Open Space Land to serve the new amenities, and paving / repaving of parking areas at the recreation center. With regard to the last element mentioned, Mr. Gibson said that the Township has the project out to bid, and is ready to award the project which involves paving, striping, and additional drainage of 200 spaces. Mr. Gibson said that the overall proposal also includes gravel paths to provide connectivity between the facility and adjacent neighborhoods. He said that this idea emerged from the pre-application meetings.

Correspondence:

Mr. Lomax reviewed the following items of correspondence:

- Letter dated 12/1/16 from Historic Cold Spring Village requesting an extension to 5/22/17 due to winter weather; their project involved exterior painting

Representatives from HCSV were in attendance and provided additional information on the project status. They said that the work to be completed included carpentry and painting, and that the majority of the carpentry had been completed. Mr. Lomax asked if the project was certain to be done by 5/22. Although the representatives said yes, it was determined that an extension to August 22nd be granted to ensure extra time. Mr. Byrne made a motion to extend the grant to 8/22/17; Mr. Craig seconded the motion; All in favor. There was no public comment on the item.

- Copy of correspondence from Mr. Kent regarding property in Lower Township for possible consideration as land acquisition. Mrs. Ernst clarified that this is an old piece of correspondence that was related to property generally discussed by the Board related to the Regional Bike Path Project. It was determined that the property is not suitable for use in conjunction with the Path, and as there is no active application with the Open Space Program, the Board would keep it in mind for future consideration, but not take any action to pursue it at this time.
- Correspondence from Mr. Richard Hluchan representing the owners of St Mary by the Sea retreat house in Cape May Point. The property in question is 1/45 acres, and is a 125 year old retreat house use by nuns. The parish is seeking to start discussions on the property as they would like to have the property preserved, rather than sold to a developer. Mr. Craig said that the building is a landmark; board members were uncertain if the property was listed on the State or National Historic Register. Board members suggested that a dialogue be started

with the property owner, the Borough, and the Historic Preservation community to determine the collective interests with regard to the property.

Closed Session:

At 12:00 noon, Mr. Craig made a motion to go into Closed Session. Mr. Clemans seconded the motion.

Decisions on Applications:

SF 16-08 - Wildwood Crest – Beach Bike Path

Board members were strongly supportive of the concept presented in the application, but found the application to be incomplete. It was determined that there are several issues that need to be addressed prior to making a decision on the project:

- Revisit and revise cost estimate – additional details and justification needed for expenditures
 - Clarification needed on breakdown of engineering costs
 - Open Space does not fund Permit Fees
- Additional information is needed on the proposed pavilion, including amenities and design
- Additional information is needed on the proposed seasonal restroom, including infrastructure needs and design
- Proposal requires modifications to the US Army Corps of Engineers Shore Protection Project plans; the Borough's proposal must be fully coordinated with the final USCOE plans and NJDEP for permitting
- Borough must develop a signage plan and pavement markings for directional and wayfinding signage for the beach bike path and crossings and amenities associated therewith

Mr. Craig made a motion to deem the application INCOMPLETE pending satisfaction of the bulleted items above; Mr. Clemans seconded the motion. A Roll Call Vote found all members in favor.

SF 16-06: City of Wildwood: Beach Bike Path

Board members were supportive of the project, but reached consensus that the application is incomplete. Additional information/ application revision is needed:

- Playground must be eliminated
- Crossings for vehicular and/or truck traffic must be identified and designated, with signage and pavement markings being identified

- Proposal requires full coordination with the US Army Corps of Engineers Shore Protection Project plans; the Borough's proposal must be fully coordinated with USCOE and NJDEP for permitting
- Plans must be revised to demonstrate connectivity and integration into existing bike/pedestrian facilities, including the Boardwalk
- Phase II of the plan must be developed to provide connectivity to the Borough of North Wildwood
- The City must provide written confirmation from the Greater Wildwoods Tourism Improvement Development Authority that the proposed path location does not conflict with the Overflow Beach Parking identified in the Wildwoods 2015 Vision Plan; if conflicts exist, modifications must be made

Mr. Craig made a motion to deem the application INCOMPLETE pending satisfaction of the bulleted items above; Mr. Clemans seconded the motion. A Roll Call Vote found the following: Mr. Clemans, Mr. Byrne, Mr. Craig, Mr. Lomax, and Ms. Gimeno – in favor. Freeholder Morey abstained.

SF 16-07 - Stone Harbor – Bikeway

Mr. Craig made a motion to recommend the project to the Board of Chosen Freeholders for funding, as presented. Mr. Byrne seconded the motion. A Roll Call Vote found all members in favor.

SF 16-04 - Dennis Township Bicycle/Walk Path, Sled Hill, and Parking

Board members reached consensus to recommend the following elements of the proposal for funding:

- Bikeway / Walkway (\$110,000)
- New Parking Area on Open Space property, serving new amenities (\$22,000)
- Access ways and connectivity to adjacent neighborhoods (\$60,000)
- 50% of total Engineering (\$12,000)
- Total amount of funding not to exceed \$204,000

Mr. Craig made a motion to recommend the bulleted items above to the Board of Chosen Freeholders for funding. Mr. Clemans seconded the motion. A Roll Call Vote found all members in favor.

Adjournment: Mr. Craig made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 1:03 pm. Mr. Clemans seconded the motion. All in favor.