



OPEN SPACES

CAPE MAY COUNTY

MINUTES – TUESDAY, MARCH 22, 2022 – 10:00 AM

COMMISSIONERS MEETING ROOM

OPEN SESSION

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 10:00 am.

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

Statement Pertaining to the Open Public Meetings Act: Mr. Lomax read the statement.

Attendance Board Members:

David Craig
Leslie Gimeno
Neil Byrne
Peter Lomax
Commissioner Will Morey

Attendance Others:

Barbara Ernst, Scott Mullen

Approval of Minutes:

Mr. Byrne made a motion to approve the minutes, as edited with comments from Mr. Lomax; Ms. Gimeno seconded the motion. All in favor.

Chairman's Report: Mr. Lomax recognized and thanked staff for their support in representing the Open Spaces Program at the County's Earth Day event, held at the Park Zoo on April 23rd. He said that Barbara, Scott, and Lauren had handed out over 120 tree seedlings to event attendees.

Director's Report: Mrs. Ernst did not have a report.

Financial Report: The financial report dated 1/31/22 was reviewed by Mr. Mullen, with a balance of approximately \$12,286,114.76 being available. Mr. Mullen said that closing on the development easement for the Bohm farm in Eldora had recently occurred. Ms. Gimeno thanked Mr. Mullen and Mrs. Ernst for their hard work on this difficult project that had taken almost 3 years from start to finish, and noted that the SADC had participated via a cost share agreement.

Correspondence:

- Correspondence from Ms. Gimeno to Mayor Mullock dated 4/7/22 requesting an update on the Lafayette Street Park, Phase 3 project. She indicated that it had come to the Planning Department's attention that the City was considering using a portion of the site for construction of a new police station, and that this action would jeopardize the integrity of the design, the regional nature of the project, and the Open Spaces Grant approval. Ms. Gimeno said that she had discussed the matter with the Deputy City Administrator and Mayor, and that they would be providing a comprehensive update on the project in early May.
- Email from Dennis Township Administrator Jessica Bishop to Ms. Gimeno dated 4/18/22 responding to questions related to Chestnut Street Park, indicating that the City is working with the State on resolving issues related to driveway access and to connectivity into the Belleplain State Forest trail system. Mr. Lomax informed the Board that he would be attending a virtual meeting tomorrow to discuss the issue with representatives from the NJDEP and the Township to discuss the issues and identify paths forward.
- Email from Mr. Graham to Ms. Gimeno dated 4/21/22 related to design services for the Woodbine EcoPark.

Financial Statement: Mr. Mullen said that he had received the financial report from the Treasurer's Office yesterday, and that one highlight is the purchase of the development easement of the Bohm sod farm in Eldora for \$815,000 with approximately half being paid by the SADC.

Application Workshop

PPCE - Beesley's Point Park – Township of Upper: Mr. Dietrich thanked the Board for the opportunity for discussion related to the expansion of Beesley's Point westward to include North Shore Road. He outlined the Township's vision for the project. At the existing park site, the fixed pier will receive new decking and Creative Placemaking railing. A shade structure will be created for the benefit of the boat ramp attendance, with its roof being consistent with the design of the site. New banner poles will be installed to support the banner system, as Atlantic City Electric is not amenable to having them installed on the existing light pole fixtured.

He indicated that a changing room will be constructed for participants in the swim program for individuals with mobility challenges. This is outside the scope of the current grant request, but the plans for this facility will be coordinated with the Open Spaces Program due to the park being the focal point of the Creative Placemaking Program. Mr. Lomax said that he appreciated the coordination efforts and indicated that there is still potential for creating a public art / osprey nest on top of the mechanical building, so wanted to be sure that the size, location, or configuration of the changing room did not preclude that future potential initiative.

Mr. Dietrich said that a foot wash and shower station will be installed near the existing pavilion. In response to a question from Mr. Lomax, Mr. Dietrich indicated that the storage shed by the boat ramp had been replaced using Township funds and it had been painted in the placemaking colors. Commissioner Morey suggested that a shade structure at the end of the pier be considered.

Mr. Dietrich was asked to look into the possibility of changing the design of the lifeguard stands to match the aesthetics of the site. In response to a question from Ms. Gimeno, Mr. Dietrich indicated that lifeguards are on duty daily from mid-June to Labor Day, and that no beach tags are required for Township beaches.

With respect to the Shore Road area of the project, Mr. Dietrich said that it is connected to the developed Beesley's Point Park by the walkway / bike path. He said that the Township envisions improvements to the bridge abutment and adjacent land at the

terminus of South Shore Road to be improved by a pergola, viewing area, green space, and memorial to the historic Stillwell sisters. Mr. Dietrich said that the NJDOT has plans to put a cul-de-sac at the terminus of the roadway and to improve parking in the immediate area, but that COVID and the offshore wind projects have caused delays in the work. The County owns the bridge abutment, which is approximately 200' in length and 66' in width. It was determined that renderings with proposed improvements are necessary to get a solid understanding of the proposal, its components, and how they fit in with existing improvements. Mr. Dietrich agreed to provide the requested materials.

There was a brief discussion on the future redevelopment of the BL England power plant site. Mr. Dietrich said that the Township hopes to ultimately tie all of the sites in the area together with similar aesthetics. He said that the redevelopment process would take some time, with just the demolition of the power plant taking approximately 3 – 3.5 years.

PR 22-03- Amanda's Field Skate Park – Township of Upper: Mr. Dietrich said that the skate park at Amanda's Field is one of the most actively used recreation facilities in the Township that is not part of organized sports, and that it had been funded through the County's Municipal Joint Venture Program in the mid-2000's. He said that it is beyond its useful life, and that maintenance has been undertaken 3-4 times per year (plus "as needed") throughout the history of the facility. The manufacturer for the metal and concrete facility has gone out of business, so replacement parts are not available and the facility is well beyond its warranty. He indicated that the Township is moving towards a new experience of the concrete "skate wave" type of facility, similar to what exists in Ocean City.

He said that other improvements to the area would include creative placemaking amenities such as benches, picnic table, trash receptacles, bike racks, etc. He said that over time, the Township will gradually implement the Creative Placemaking Plan throughout the park. When asked about a potential decline in user basis based on population trends, Mr. Dietrich said that even if local youth numbers are declining, the skating culture has park users migrating from park to park to get different experiences, so he anticipates good usage on the new facility.

Ms. Gimeno asked if Mr. Dietrich could produce maintenance records for the site. Mr. Dietrich said that the Township has certified playground safety inspector services available and although they did not track ongoing maintenance activities and expenses, he has the original paperwork from the facility when it was built that clearly indicates that it has exceeded its lifespan.

Ms. Gimeno said that a new application form needs to be completed showing that the project is a Park/Recreation Development project, not a Program Priority Creative Placemaking implementation. She encouraged Mr. Dietrich to consider implementing the Placemaking Plan throughout the park, rather than just a small area adjacent the skate park facility. Mr. Dietrich said that he would provide a revised application and would consider future placemaking opportunities.

Mr. Lomax thanked Mr. Dietrich for his attendance and said that the Board will be providing written feedback with respect to the applications.

Public Comment – There was no public comment.

Closed Session: The Board entered into Closed Session at 11:20 upon a motion by Mr. Byrne, seconded by Ms. Gimeno.

Open Session: The Board returned to Open Session at 12:08 upon a motion by Mr. Byrne, seconded by Ms. Gimeno.

Public Comment: None

Motion to Adjourn: Ms. Gimeno made a motion to adjourn at 12:09; Mr. Byrne seconded the motion. All in favor.