



MINUTES – TUESDAY, APRIL 27th, 2021 – 10:00 AM – VIA ZOOM

OPEN SESSION

Call to Order: The meeting was held via Zoom and was called to order at 10:01 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:

Peter Lomax

Dave Clemans

David Craig (joined in progress at 10:13)

Leslie Gimeno

Neil Byrne

Commissioner Will Morey

Attendance Others:

Barbara Ernst, Scott Mullen, Joe Molineaux

Others as identified in presentations

Approval of Minutes: Mr. Lomax indicated that the minutes from the February 23rd meeting had been distributed via email and provided Ms. Gimeno with a few minor corrections. Mr. Byrne made a motion to approve the minutes, as corrected. Mr. Clemans seconded the motion. All in favor for the Open Session minutes; Mr. Lomax abstained from voting on the Closed Session minutes.

Chairman's Report: Mr. Lomax said that there was a full agenda and that the Board intended to hear presentations, go into closed session for deliberations, then make decisions in Open Session. Ms. Gimeno has reserved a space on the Commissioners' Meeting agenda for May 11th and any recommended projects would be advancing to the public hearing process at that time.

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

Financial Report: Ms. Gimeno said that an updated financial report from the Treasurer's Office had not been received, but that the balance from February was \$16,206,027.

Correspondence:

- Email dated 4/8/21 from Jody Alessandrine of MAC to Ms. Gimeno requesting clarification of 2021 Program Guide with respect to matching requirements for the Historic Preservation Program.
- Email from Megan Balne of Hyland Levin to Ms. Gimeno regarding the Crowley-King Land Acquisition requesting an indefinite adjournment for the application in order to give the City and the applicant time to find a mutually agreeable solution.
- Email dated 4/6/21 from Ms. Gimeno to the Open Space Board outlining the Board's comments and questions related to the Ocean City Skate Park
- Memorandum from Michael Allegretto from the City of Ocean City dated 3/9/21 outlining the City's proposal to relocate the existing skate park
- Memorandum from Ms. Gimeno to Mr. Allegretto dated 4/7/21 summarizing the consensus of the Open Space Board with respect to the skate park relocation proposal
- Email from Dottie McCrosson to Ms. Gimeno dated 4/7/21 indicating that the City has purchased the former car dealership adjacent the City's Community Center and requesting a pre-application meeting
- Email chain between Megan Baine, Attorney, and Ms. Gimeno regarding the Crowley/King land acquisition application, with Mr. Lomax garnering consensus from the Board of providing October 26th as the meeting date to discuss the application (rather than providing an open-ended extension of time)

Presentations:

SFCE 20-01–Public Beach Access Improvements – Wildwood Crest: Mayor Cabrera introduced himself, Borough Administrator Connie Mahon, and Engineer Marc DeBlasio. He said that the application had been submitted in the December 2020 funding round. The Borough had received their CAFRA Permit for public access improvements at 22 street ends that include timber bump outs, ADA ramps, foot wash station, bike racks, ADA Benches, and beach signage. The Borough plans to use the Coastal theme of the Creative Placemaking Plan. He indicated that there are two phases of the project. The first 7 of the improvements would be Borough-funded, with several of them being completed prior to the summer season. Beginning in Spring of 2022, the Borough would undertake phase 2, hopefully with the benefit of an Open Spaces grant. Mr. DeBlasio said that the cost estimate prepared in 2020 indicated that it would cost approximately \$3.2 million for 22 street ends. He said the project area was the southern half of the Borough where there is not a boardwalk, and streets dead end into the concrete beach wall with no provision of public space. The proposal involves bumping out onto the beach to create public space. He said that the Borough's current contract for 7 street ends was awarded at \$1.25 million using Borough funds; this is significantly over what was estimated, and he attributed that to the cost of lumber prices. He indicated that the Borough also has a \$400,000 Small Cities grant application pending.

The Borough indicated that they have their CAFRA permit "in hand" and that they have funded \$1.25m, with an additional \$400,000 grant application pending.

Mr. Lomax referred to the review by Designing Local dated 1/20/21. The coastal placemaking family will be used for the site furnishings, signage, etc. There is no shade structure being planned for any of the sites, and materials to be used are consistent with the placemaking plan. The cable railing system is proposed to be used, however there have been concerns related to this system based on maintenance issues. The Borough is able to consider using a railing system with similar aesthetics if necessary. Mayor

Cabrera said that the Rambler Road site has the cable railing and that the public works department is accustomed to maintaining them on a regular basis.

It was recognized that Wildwood Crest has established their own aesthetic and that the Creative Placemaking Plan has been successfully implemented. Mr. DeBlasio said that the existing 7 street ends have been bid without the Creative Placemaking items, and that they need to be added in. The Borough wanted to get input on the items before doing so. Mr. DeBlasio said that timing and costs of lumber were impacting the overall project implementation. With the 7 street ends that were bid, only 2 will be done before summer. The others will be completed after the summer, and a change order can be used to incorporate the Creative Placemaking elements. The Mayor questioned the use of Creative Placemaking benches and how to incorporate the Borough's Memorial Bench program. While there is consensus on the coastal site furnishings, there will need to be collaboration on how to deal with existing benches and how to honor the commitment to the memorial program.

Mr. Lomax asked the Borough to confirm that the foot wash stations will have similar aesthetic and color palate. Mr. DeBlasio was asked to connect with Matt Leasure related to the ADA detectible warning surface. It is recommended that the signage package use a pared down version of the kiosk designs. Ms. Mahon said that the signs had already been created by the Borough and that they were not in the Creative Placemaking design format. The language had been required and approved by the Joint Insurance Fund. They will be installed prior to the Summer. The use of blade signs and other vertical elements were questioned and the Borough was asked to incorporate them into the designs. Mr. DeBlasio said that this project represents a total of 22 street ends, approximately ½ of the Borough south of Rambler Road. The remaining half of the street ends will be a future project in 2023-24.

Mr. Lomax asked if there were any questions from Board members. Mr. Craig asked if there were any plans for the creation of ADA-accessible parking adjacent the street ends. Mr. DeBlasio said that no parking was proposed as part of the project, and that there are site constraints that would preclude addressing these needs. He indicated that handicapped parking is available nearby with accessible routes to the street ends. The Mayor added that the streets leading up to the proposed project areas have hotel/motel or condo access or parking, but that ADA parking would be available on nearby Atlantic Avenue. Ms. Mahon added that most of the families pull up to the beach ends and drop off the family, including any individuals with disabilities. Then the driver goes off and finds a parking spot.

Commissioner Morey asked about the aesthetics related to the project, saying that he would like to see more beautification rather than just function. He asked if any sketches or renderings are available. Mr. DeBlasio said that there were none for the current project, but suggested that the Commissioner look at the improvements made at Rambler Road. When asked about the possibility of including shade structures, Mr. DeBlasio said that would require a permit modification from NJDEP. The Mayor added that the current permit took 1.5 years to obtain and the Borough would not be inclined to revisit the issue. Commissioner Morey again stated that more aesthetics would be desirable; the Mayor responded that they would use the Creative Placemaking benches, but that there would need to be a way to incorporate the Borough's Memory Bench program. He said shade structures would not be viable because they would be the subject of neighbors' complaints. Mr. DeBlasio said that site constraints precluded any major improvements and that the current proposal does improve aesthetics over the current situation. When asked about the possibility adding site lighting, the Mayor said that there is no electric service. When asked about the possibility of adding in vertical elements or banners, the Mayor said that there is no way to do so consistently. Commissioner Morey said that without elements such as vertical elements and lighting, the aesthetic was lacking.

Mr. Lomax said that he was looking at aerial imagery and that approximately 2/3 of the street ends had at least one pole. Although the varying conditions may not allow for consistent treatment with vertical elements, there appears to at least be the opportunity at most locations. He indicated that sign packages are a way of elevating the beautification of sites.

Commissioner Morey asked if there were any details on the proposed decking. Mr. DeBlasio said that the new deck would tie into the existing bulkhead and would be Trex or other similar material and would replicate the end of Rambler Road, with the aesthetic being cable wire nest to weathered wood.

Mr. Lomax suggested that the Open Spaces Board and Borough work together to develop the site furnishings and signage package. With no additional comments or questions from the Board, Mr. Lomax opened the project for public comment. There was none. Mayor Cabrera asked about the timeline for the application process. Mr. Lomax said that the intent of the Board was to deliberate today in Closed Session and to take action in Open Session. Those projects advancing would be presented at the Commissioners Meeting on 5/11, with a vote taking place on 7/13, after the conclusion of the public comment period. The Mayor thanked the Board and assured them that the door is open to work together on the design and aesthetics. Mr. Lomax said he understood that the beach information signs would need to be installed prior to the summer season, but encouraged the Borough to do so in a manner that can be adapted in the future to include Creative Placemaking elements. The Mayor agreed, and said that the Borough

is looking forward to the grand opening of Sunrise Park at the end of June and encouraged Board members to be on the lookout for invitations.

SF 16-02 – Bike Path North – Middle Township: Administrator Kim Krauss introduced herself, Nancy Sittineri, and Lea Domico (from RVE) and thanked the Board for the opportunity to submit this revision to their previously approved project. Ms. Sittineri provided an overview of the project and indicated that the concept design that was submitted with the 2016 application had undergone several alignment adjustments, but that the “third time was the charm”. The Township now has all of the necessary permits in hand, and is seeking additional funding in the amount of \$615,314 to cover unforeseen costs that were the result of the realignment and permitting processes. The original cost estimate was \$1,626,761, and the newly updated estimate is \$2,285,575. The path will run from the Cape May County Park and will extend to the border of Dennis Township, where Phase 1 of the path is in place leading to South Seaville.

Ms. Sittineri provided details of the alignment as follows:

- Existing path terminus at Park Zoo will extend northward along County property adjacent the property line and will continue behind the existing houses
- Two easements have been secured to carry the path back to Court House South Dennis Road
- Path will continue on Golf Course / Apache Development property; easement has been secured
- This will lead to the AC Electric Right of Way where the path will be extended to the Dennis Township border

When asked about the road crossings at Siegtown and Goshen-Swainton Roads, Ms. Sittineri said that there would be marked crossings and signage/safety measures put in place similar to those used in Rio Grande. In response to a question from Mr. Lomax, Ms. Sittineri said that of the total amount of additional funds, \$571,814 was for capital, and \$43,500 was for 50% of the engineering and design costs. Ms. Gimeno thanked the Township for persevering with the project.

Mr. Byrne asked about timing for the project. Ms. Sittineri said that bids are due back on 5/26 and can be awarded within 60 days unless an extension is needed. The Township needs commitment of County funds in order to advance the project. Ms. Krauss said that the Township is ready to move as swiftly as possible and indicated that the permits did have some restrictions as far as limiting activity during certain times of year. The Township is hopeful for Fall 2021 construction. Ms. Sittineri said that there is a relatively short contract time of 5 months based on the length of the trail, and respectfully asked that the Open Spaces Board look favorably upon the project. Ms. Krauss said that the Township recognizes that it is not ideal to have to ask for additional funding, but that they had collectively worked very hard to get the alignment and permitting completed in the best interest of the safety of the users. She thanked the Board for the patience and allowing the initial grant to remain in place as work on the project progressed.

There was no public comment on the project. Mr. Lomax thanked the Township for their attendance.

Public Comment: Mr. Lomax opened the meeting for public comment on either of the applications or other matters. There was no public comment.

Closed Session: The Board entered Closed Session at 11:07 upon a motion by Mr. Craig, seconded by Mr. Byrne.

Return to Open Session: The Board returned to Open Session at 12:38 per a motion by Mr. Clemans, seconded by Ms. Gimeno, with all members in favor.

Public Comment – There was a member of the public present with a phone number of 609 333-xxxx, but that person did not respond to a request for public comment or questions.

Decisions on Applications:

SFCE 20-01 - Public Beach Access Improvements – Wildwood Crest: Consensus was reached by the Open Spaces Board to engage in dialogue with the Borough in advance of additional design work. Ms. Gimeno was asked to write a letter to the Borough communicating this. Further, they will be asked to separate ADA improvements into categories: 1) retrofit or fixing existing beach access for individuals with disabilities and 2) providing new ADA access where such access does not currently exist. They will also be asked to identify streets where ADA-accessible parking spaces can be provided. The County seeks to work with the Borough to identify sites that have the most potential for improvement into meaningful and special public spaces (within the parameters of the existing Borough permits), employing the Creative Placemaking plan as the foundation for the improvements. It should be noted that Mr. Lomax abstained from participation in reaching this consensus.

SF 16-02 – Bike Path North – Middle Township: Mr. Craig made a motion to approve the amended application and to make recommendation for an additional \$615,314 in funding in support of the project; Mr. Clemans seconded the motion. All members in favor, with the exception of Mr. Lomax, who abstained.

PR 20-01 – Byrne Community Center – City of Wildwood: Consensus was reached to send a letter to the City requesting an explanation of the roughly \$800,000 increase in costs between the initial application and the application modified in response to the review letter from Designing Local. The letter will also request supplemental dialogue with the City with respect to project elements, and specifically related to the rehabilitation of the Fitness Track.

SFCE 20-02 – Bay Marina Park – Borough of Stone Harbor: Mr. Craig made a motion to recommend the project in the amount of \$1,780,862.50, as requested; Mr. Clemans seconded the motion. All members were in favor, with the exception of Mr. Lomax, who abstained.

Motion to Adjourn: Mr. Byrne made a motion to adjourn at 12:48; Mr. Clemans seconded the motion. All in favor.