



MINUTES – TUESDAY, MAY 25TH, 2021 – 10:00 AM – VIA ZOOM

OPEN SESSION

Call to Order: The meeting was held via Zoom and 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:

Peter Lomax

David Craig

Leslie Gimeno

Neil Byrne

Attendance Others:

Barbara Ernst, Scott Mullen, Joe Molineaux

Others as identified in presentations

Approval of Minutes: Mr. Lomax indicated that the minutes from the April 27th meeting had been distributed via email and provided Ms. Gimeno. Mr. Byrne made a motion to approve the minutes, as corrected. Mr. Craig seconded the motion. All in favor.

Chairman's Report: Mr. Lomax said that he was forgoing the Chairman's report.

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

Financial Report: Mrs. Ernst said that she had not yet received an updated Financial Report from the Treasurer's Office.

Correspondence:

- Email from Louis Belasco, representing the City of Cape May to Ms. Gimeno dated 5/19/21 outlining the City's efforts to preserve the AME Church and intent to apply for Historic Preservation funding from the Program. They are approaching the project in two phases, with the first being stabilization and the second being restoration. They are requesting confirmation that the two-step process is eligible for consideration by the Open Spaces Program.

Presentations:

PR 20-01 – Byrne Community Center: Mr. Lomax indicated that he and Ms. Gimeno had scheduled a workshop with Mr. Groom and Mr. Zumpino to review the cost estimates in detail and that there would not be a presentation or further deliberation on the project at today's meeting. Mr. Craig made a motion to table the application until the revised documents are received by the City; Mr. Byrne seconded the motion. All in favor.

LA 20-01: Block 409, Lot 95 and Block 24.10, Lot 9 – Township of Lower; Bruce and Eliza Waterman Donation: Mr. Lomax welcomed Mr. and Mrs. Waterman to the virtual meeting and thanked them for their application to donate land to the Open Spaces Program. Mr. Lomax said that the application indicates the desire for the Watermans to subdivide out a portion of the lots, and to give the balance of the land to the County, which owns adjoining land to the North, East, and South of the property in question. Mr. Waterman described Block 95, Lot 9 as being an isolated 100' x 100' lot with road frontage that has adjacent houses. He said that it is low-lying and has wetlands on it. He said that they had purchased the land with the thought of acquiring additional acreage in support of multi-family development, but those plans had not worked out.

Mr. Waterman then described Block 409, Lot 24.01 which was originally multiple lots but had been consolidated by the Township. There is a total of 13.37 acres, and they hope to subdivide off a buildable lot of approximately 1 acre (at the top left of the property) for the purpose of building a single family home. In response to a question posed by Mr. Lomax, Mr. Waterman indicated that he is a builder and is familiar with wetlands regulatory process and he is relatively confident that the NJDEP will be allowing a single building footprint. He said that he is willing to spend the money to determine if they can build.

When asked about the characteristics of the property, Mr. Waterman said that there are trails and dirt bikes and 4 wheelers go through the property. Mr. Lomax asked Mrs. Ernst about the process for property donations; she indicated that it is the same process as regular land acquisitions, but that there are no appraisals ordered. The County will pay for the survey for the donated land once the subdivision has been finalized and a phase 1 environmental assessment comes back clear. Mr. Waterman agreed to provide a survey of the buildable lot that is being subdivided as soon as it is ready so that Mrs. Ernst can move forward with the County process.

Mr. Craig asked if we could move forward with decision on the application today. Mr. Lomax responded that we need additional information such as the visual of the subdivision so that we know exactly what land is being offered, but that we work to achieve consensus on a path forward.

With no further questions from the Board or the public, Mr. Lomax thanked the Watermans for their generosity, stating that we strive to acquire lands both for natural resources/preservation purposes and for recreational purposes. Mr. Waterman said that Lower Township has been great for their family, which has thrived there and that they have lived here over 50 years and are happy to have the opportunity to give back to the community. Mr. Lomax said that the Board will go into Closed Session to discuss the application. He said that it's possible that we will reach consensus on the project today, but that additional information such as the subdivision and survey will be needed for a final recommendation. He envisioned next steps as: deliberation/consensus; receive survey; forego appraisals; order Phase 1 environmental; order survey for balance of property; then the contractual process. Mr. Waterman said that he will send the necessary information to Ms. Gimeno, and thanked the Board for their consideration.

Public Comment: Mr. Lomax opened the meeting for public comment; there was none.

Closed Session: The Board entered Closed Session at 10:28 upon a motion by Mr. Craig, seconded by Mr. Byrne.

Return to Open Session: The Board returned to Open Session at 10:59 per a motion by Mr. Craig, seconded by Mr. Byrne, with all members in favor.

Decisions:

Mr. Lomax indicated that the Board has reached consensus to move forward with the Waterman donation process, with a final decision to be made upon receipt of the survey and subdivision.

Public Comment – There were no members of the public present.

Motion to Adjourn: Mr. Byrne made a motion to adjourn at 11:01; Mr. Craig seconded the motion. All in favor.