

## **Open Spaces Board Meeting – OPEN SESSION**

Tuesday, June 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2020 – 10:00 am

Meeting via Zoom – Zoom instructions posted on Open Spaces page of County Website

### **Board Member Attendance:**

Neil Byrne

David Craig

Dave Clemans

Peter Lomax

Will Morey

Leslie Gimeno

### **Others In Attendance:**

Barbara Ernst

Scott Mullen

Joe Molineaux (Economic Development / Zoom Meeting)

### **Call to Order:**

Mr. Lomax called the meeting to order at 10:04.

### **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.

### **Roll Call:**

Neil Byrne, David Craig, Dave Clemans, Peter Lomax, Freeholder Morey, and Leslie Gimeno were in attendance.

### **Adoption of Minutes:**

Minutes were found to be incomplete, so action on this item was tabled.

**Chairman's Report:**

Mr. Lomax thanked everyone for being in attendance. He said that the work of the Board had been continued through the efforts of staff and several Board members, and that today's meeting would serve as a status update regarding program activities since February.

**Director's Report: None**

**Financial Report:** Mr. Lomax noted that as of January, the available balance was approximately \$9.2 million. It was determined that clarification on the intent of Lower Township with respect to their proposed Aquatic Center was necessary, as there is \$3m in funds reserved for that project.

**Correspondence:**

There was no correspondence.

**Discussion / Project Updates:**

Strasenburgh: Mr. Lomax indicated that 2 appraisals had been done and outlined next steps, which would be to send out an offer letter to Mr. Strasenburgh. Staff was asked to review the letter sent to the Board from Alma George, the adjacent property owner, which outlined her questions/issues related to potentially submitting an application to the Program for preservation of her property, which is adjacent Mr. Strasenburgh's. There was some discussion regarding Magnolila Lake, which is in joint ownership between Mr. Strasenburgh and Ms. George.

Woodbine EcoPark: Mr. Lomax gave a brief overview of the project, which consists of 3 phases. He said that one of the phases involved the construction of a \$150,000 playground, and the Borough was successful in obtaining \$400,000 in NJ DCA funds to construct a "Jake's Law Playground" which is an ADA-integrated play facility. Mr. Lomax said that he, Ms. Gimeno, and Mr. Mullen had several meetings related to the playground and how to have it designed in such a manner to complement the eco-park aesthetic. After several unsuccessful attempts at working with a playground equipment vendor, the Borough has elected to seek out the services of a landscape design firm that will be better suited for the task at hand. However, after finding a qualified firm, the Borough has determined that it cannot support the cost of this job (\$25k), and has asked the Open Space Program to consider partnering in the design efforts in the amount of \$21k.

Some discussion was had as to how the Board could consider this via a Shared Services Agreement, with one of the greatest concerns being how to distinguish the characteristics and merits of this project and to justify our participation in the design efforts. The Borough has outlined a number of issues that identify the uniqueness of the site, with the fact that the site will be County-owned being of primary consideration. Other contributing factors include that this will be the site of the only Jake's Law playground in the County, the site is substantial acreage and the eco/natural theme has been carefully carried out throughout the site amenities, and that it offers an opportunity to create amenities for people of all ages and abilities.

The Board reached consensus that this project was worthy of consideration for participation in the design process, and that the Resolution and the Shared Services Agreement should both provide details as to how the project is unique as justification for the Program's participation in the design.

Mr. Craig made a motion to enter into a Shared Services Agreement with the Borough of Woodbine to provide funding in an amount not to exceed \$21,000 in support of the specialized design services to integrate the Jake's Law playground into the EcoPark. The motion further requires language to be added to the standard Shared Services agreement and Resolution authorizing the same that clearly outlines the integral role of the Count in the design process, qualities that make the project unique, maintenance standards, and requirements for including Open Spaces plaque on site. Mr. Byrne seconded the motion. A Roll Call vote found all members to be in favor. Mr. Lomax asked that the draft Shared Services Agreement and Resolution be forwarded to the Open Space Board for its review prior to sending it to the municipality.

Dedication Plaque Standards: Mr. Lomax said that the question of dedication plaques and standards arose recently due to the Avalon Manor Fishing Pier project, which has neared completion. Board members expressed concern that the Open Spaces Program be adequately recognized on funded project sites. Mr. Lomax agreed, stating that the goal is to respect the partnerships that made the projects possible, not to have individual people/professional firms recognized. Mr. Lomax said that the Board needs to set specific standards (consistent with Creative Placemaking brand mark and font), and contain a consistent statement/message. Board members recommended that applicants be required to make the plaque (content/location) as part of the application/approval process. With respect to plaque design and site naming rights, a 50% benchmark was suggested: For projects with greater than 50% Open Spaces financial participation, Open Spaces program is required to participate in plaque design and site naming; For projects with less than 50% Open Spaces funding, municipalities can be the primary driver for both, so long as a minimum plaque design standard is met. Staff was asked to work with Designing Local to develop draft standards and layouts for the Board's consideration.

Historic Preservation Program Standards/Eligibility Discussion: Ms. Gimeno explained that under current Program guidelines, only those properties that are listed on the State/National Historic Register are eligible for a 60% grant/40% match. However, it has come to our attention that in the City of Cape May, there is a Historic District that has been listed on the National Register, and that structures characterized as being "contributing" to that District are treated by the State Historic Preservation Office as having the same status as those that have individual listings. Therefore, if the Board would agree to

amend the eligibility language in our Program, any structures listed as contributing structures on register-listed historic districts would have the opportunity to apply for the 60/40 grant/match (so long as all other eligibility factors, including site control/ownership are met). Board members agreed that this scenario provided clarification to the process, and that this adjustment meets the original intent of our program, making it consistent with the NJ SHPO programs.

Funding Rounds: Mr. Lomax reminded the Board that the 2 remaining funding rounds of 2020 both have Special Funding Round opportunities for Coastal Enhancement and Creative Placemaking Implementation.

Next meeting: It has been determined that meetings will be held via Zoom until further notice. Mr. Lomax thanked Mr. Molineaux for his Zoom support.

**Public Comment:** No members of the public were present.

**Adjournment:** Mr. Byrne made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 11:43. Mr. Clemans seconded the motion. All in favor.