



MINUTES – TUESDAY, OCTOBER 27<sup>TH</sup>, 2020 – 10:00 AM – VIA ZOOM

Call to Order: The meeting was held via Zoom and was called to order at 10:09 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:

Dave Clemans

David Craig

Leslie Gimeno

Peter Lomax

Freeholder Will Morey

Neil Byrne (joined in progress at 10:27)

Attendance Others:

Barbara Ernst, Scott Mullen, Joe Molineaux

Municipal representatives identified in presentations

Annie Salvatore (HCSV)

Approval of Minutes: Mr. Lomax stated that the minutes from February 25<sup>th</sup> open and closed session had been distributed to the Board. He offered one clarification related to a closed session item. Mr. Clemans made a motion to adopt the minutes, as amended. Mr. Craig seconded the motion. All in favor.

Mr. Lomax then offered the July 28<sup>th</sup> minutes (open session only/ no closed session) for the Board's consideration, with one small correction. Mr. Craig made a motion to adopt the minutes, as amended. Mr. Clemans seconded the motion. All in favor.

The open and closed session minutes from September 22<sup>nd</sup> were then discussed, with several corrections and clarifications being provided by Mr. Lomax. Mr. Craig made a motion to adopt the minutes, as amended. Mr. Clemans seconded the motion. All in favor.

Chairman's Report: Mr. Lomax had several items of note that reflect the good work of the Program and its partners.

- Middle Township's Avalon Manor Fishing Pier was given an award by the NJ Society of Municipal Engineers in the municipal design category. He indicated that the Township had reconstructed and expanded the pier and had incorporated Creative Placemaking elements. He suggested that individuals watch the drone video to familiarize themselves with the improvements.
- Dennis Township has recently released a video of Phase 1 of their newly constructed bike path.
- An article in the 10/26 edition of the Press of Atlantic City highlighted Middle Township's use of the Open Spaces Creative Placemaking Plan. Mr. Lomax remarked that this was the first time that the media had focused on the Creative Placemaking, and hopefully is a sign of things to come.
- Mr. Lomax said that for Park/Recreation and Special Funding projects, the program would be working with the consultants from Designing Local to integrate Creative Placemaking elements and to ensure that there were complete signage packages. He stated that new Program Guidelines will be rolled out in 2021 that would provide additional guidance, and that municipalities will be able to have the benefit of the services of Designing Local prior to their presentations in the future.

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

Financial Report: Mr. Lomax said that the Treasurer's Office had provided the balance through 8/31/20, and that there is \$16,321,212 in funds available.

Correspondence:

- Letter dated 10/23/20 from Wildwood Mayor Pete Byron to Ms. Gimeno requesting a pre-application conference for the Maxwell Field project in early November. Mr. Lomax said that he and Ms. Gimeno had discussed the potential project, and that Ms. Gimeno had encouraged the City to refer to the Program eligibility factors and priorities prior to developing the project and scheduling the preapplication meeting.
- Letter dated 10/23/20 from Jack Plackter of Fox Rothschild to Mr. Lomax regarding East Cape May Associates / Sewell Tract in the City of Cape May. The letter indicates that the East Cape May Associates is in negotiations with the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection. Mr. Plackter is seeking to confirm that the County has set aside \$1.745m in funding in support of the acquisition of the property and asks if there is an opportunity to make application for additional funds. Mr. Lomax requested that the record reflect that he will not participate in any future discussions related to this parcel, and that Ms. Gimeno would be taking the lead.
- Email dated 10/23/20 from Nancy Sittineri to a number of individuals including Mr. Lomax and Ms. Gimeno providing notice of the NJ Society of Municipal Engineers' Award for the Middle Township Fishing Pier.
- Email dated 10/26/20 from Annie Salvatore to Mrs. Ernst requesting consideration of eligibility for the Historic Cold Spring Village to purchase and have an Amish Pole Barn constructed in the maintenance/storage area of the Village

Presentations:

HP 20-03 – City of Cape May - Franklin Street School: City Manager Inderwies introduced himself and thanked the Board for the opportunity to provide an overview of the project. The City has partnered with the County and the County Library Commission to

develop the \$8 million project to convert a historic school into a vibrant community center and library. Mr. Rutala said that the project was very well vetted between the partners and the community, and that the City's Historic Preservation Committee has also been engaged in the process. The City and the County have applied for State Library Bond Act Funding and have received a \$500,000 grant from the National Park Service in support of the project. The amount of funding being requested via the Open Spaces Program is \$240,000; these funds will be used to restore the exterior of the historic school block building. Mr. Rutala said it is anticipated that the plans and specifications will be done in July 2021, with bid award in September 2021, and construction completion in September 2022. In response to a question from Mr. Lomax, Mr. Rutala indicated that if the grant from the State Library Bond Act is received, it would reduce the amount to be paid by the City and the County (in equal amounts). Either way, the project will move ahead as planned. The Library will be located in the rear addition, in a building that is not historic. From a square footage perspective, the Library will be about 2/3 of the two buildings (school block and addition), and the community space will be about 1/3.

Restoration work to be done on the historic school block includes repointing bricks, repairing windows, and rehabilitating masonry to retain and enhance the historic attributes. This building has not been used in 20 years, and extensive interior work will also be done so that it can be used as community space, office for Center for Community Arts, flex space for community meetings, reading room, and kitchen/demonstration room. There will also be an area dedicated to telling the history of the building and its surrounding neighborhood. Mayor Lear described the area as a hub of community assets which include the elementary school, parks, and the new Harriet Tubman Museum. He said that the City had made certain to stabilize the building in the past years, but that it took a large effort and partners to be able to develop plans of this magnitude. Mr. Rutala added that the City has received a Neighborhood Preservation Grant and will be conducting other complimentary restoration and enhancement activities to elevate conditions in the immediate area.

When asked about the availability of parking to serve the site, the Mayor said that parking is always difficult to address but that they hoped to obtain the use of 29 parking spaces from the welcome center, and the new Lafayette Street Park would also add parking capacity nearby.

Mr. Craig asked about the plan for maintaining the building exterior. Mr. Inderwies said that a comprehensive maintenance program with frequent inspections had been developed and would be managed by the County and the City. He added that any structural and environmental issues that were identified during the analysis and feasibility phases of the project will be addressed through the construction process. He stated that permitting through the Historic Preservation Commission and the NJ Department of Community Affairs were being addressed, and that the City and County were committed to the project even if the State Library Bond Act funding is not approved. Mr. Lomax asked about the fate of the current library building, and Mr. Inderwies said that there are ongoing discussions and several options currently being evaluated.

Ms. Gimeno added two points to the discussion. The first was the Michael Calafati is the architect of record, and he is qualified as a specialist in Historic Preservation. The second was that the historic school block has a Certificate of Eligibility from the State Historic Preservation Office and the building was listed as a contributing structure on the City's National Historic Register nomination, so that the project qualifies for a 60% grant / 40% match. With no further questions from the Board or the public, Mr. Lomax thanked the City for the presentation and for their patience as the Open Spaces Board made determination on the eligibility criteria.

SFCE 20-02: City of Cape May – Phase 4 Lafayette Street Park: Jim Rutala thanked the Board for their consideration of the application, stating that the Phase would cost an estimated \$1.57 m, with a grant request of \$1.274m. Mr. Inderwies said that Phase 1 of the Lafayette Street Park construction was complete, and that the design for Phases 2 & 3 had been completed and the project is under CAFRA, SHPO, and local HPC review. Bid and award are expected in early 2021 after all permitting has been addressed.

Mr. Inderwies described Phase 4 as having a different concept focusing on the unique opportunity provided by the land which includes trail access to coastal wetlands, and a freshwater lake. He said that it is a tremendous opportunity for environmental education, ecotourism, and the like. He said that a CAFRA permit would be required and the City had wanted funding in place before proceeding to final design and a pre-application conference. Green Acres had awarded a \$500k grant for Phase 4 already. Tom Thornton said that they will be moving ahead with final design in January in anticipation of a review by CAFRA and anticipate that the project could be ready for bid in October 2021 or earlier. In response to a question by Mr. Lomax, Mr. Thornton indicated that the City had not yet had a pre-application conference with the NJDEP, but that they were confident that NJDEP would look favorably upon the project due to the fact that it would be providing public access to waterways and open space.

Mr. Thornton provided an overview of the elements of Phase 4 which include a nature trail (a portion of which is elevated boardwalk), 3 observation platforms (20'x12'), creative placemaking elements, and a separate entrance for school use. When asked if the observation platform design was taken from the Creative Placemaking Plan, Mr. Thornton said that this was yet to be determined, but that the cost estimates provided in the application were based on 'top down' construction method that has less of an impact to the environment. He indicated that they City would comply with Creative Placemaking standards. Mr. Inderwies added that the facility would be used for a number of purposes that include watching sunsets, nature, birding, habitat, and education, and that the City was currently maturing the design package and amenities. Mr. Lomax asked how the cost estimates were derived without having settled on materials and what Creative Placemaking elements would be included. Mr. Thornton said that the budget would need to be adjusted to include the CP elements.

Mr. Craig asked about how the City intended to name the Phases, and Mr. Inderwies said that the City planned to use the traditional names of "Wise-Anderson Park" and Lafayette Street Park. Mr. Craig said that the County would need to be included in that conversation.

Councilwoman Hendricks said that she had taken part in the Creative Placemaking stakeholder review process and her opinion is that this is a site where Creative Placemaking can be implemented fully, as the site is outside of the historic district and its sensitive nature. Mr. Lomax said that the Board recognizes opportunities for scalable implementation and that the CP system was designed to be able to be incorporated into a variety of sites, citing the War Memorial Park as being one where subtle CP elements could be added. He said that the site was a success in that elements of CP were integrated to help reinforce branding and the participation of County taxpayers in making the improvements possible. He recognizes the significant opportunity presented via Phase 4, and reiterated Mr. Craig's statement that the County has an interest in partnering in the naming of parks, given the investment of Program funds in them. With no further questions from the Board or the public, Mr. Lomax thanked the City for their presentation.

PR 15-01 – Lafayette Street Park Phase 3 – Fountain Discussion – City of Cape May: By matter of introduction, Mr. Lomax provided a brief overview of the status of the discussion between the City and the Open Spaces Board regarding the incorporation of a water feature in the Lafayette Street Park Phase 3 project. Mr. Thornton said that the City had undergone an extensive stakeholder input process and had provided 20-30 visual examples for stakeholders to evaluate. He said that the current design had been selected by consensus, and that it represented a simple but elegant approach most suitable for the City. He described the design as being 20' in diameter, circular in design, and having a dynamic curtain of water. He said that it will be tastefully lit at night and had a granite wall/seating area. He said that the City was open for suggestions, but that it had been a challenge to get to this point where the City and stakeholders are happy with the design, materials, and location. Mr. Craig stated his opinion that if there was a consensus at the City level, then he would respect that. In response to a question from Mr. Lomax, Mr. Thornton said that the cost estimate is \$250,000. Ms. Gimeno asked about the seasonal nature of the fountain and asked how it would look in the non-operational months, citing concerns for its scale related to the space. Mr. Thornton said that it would be operational approximately April to November and winterized the balance of the year. Safety issues with respect to depth of water and gap for water return were discussed, including how to prevent damage from skateboarding activities. Ms. Gimeno asked about the opportunity for the City to cost share in the fountain; Mr. Inderwies said that it would be possible. Mr. Craig asked if it would be possible to coordinate the historically accurate lighting features in the area of the fountain and possibly in the Phase 4 design.

SFCP 20-03– Dennis Township Bike Path Amenities: Mr. Lomax reiterated that the bike path drone video looks great and looks forward to collaborating on an official trail opening. He said that the Open Spaces Board is working to provide clear direction on the dedication plaque, and that Designing Local is still under contract to aid in the Creative Placemaking Implementation. Jack Gibson thanked the Board and said that Phase 1 of the bike path is currently 90% complete, with 2.4 miles having been paved. Remaining work involves creating small parking areas and installing required signage. He described this application as being modest in scope and that it involves benches, trash receptacles, bike racks, and signage to be placed in identified locations along the route. Mr. Lomax asked if the concrete foundations for the benches had been poured yet; Mr. Gibson said they had not but the forms had been constructed. A change order with the current contractor can be used for completing the balance of the project, including the Creative Placemaking elements. When asked if the signs were designed yet, Mr. Gibson said they had not. Ms. Gimeno said that Middle Township is working on their signs for Rio Grande Park and that she would ask for the final renderings and plans for these to be made available to other municipalities along the bike path so that all signs were consistent.

Program Updates: Mr. Lomax said that he and the staff were working on developing changes to the Program, based on board discussions of the previous months. The changes will be provided to the Board for their consideration in anticipation of a 2021 roll-out.

Public Comment: Mr. Lomax asked if there were any members of the public who wished to provide comments. Mrs. Annie Salvatore identified herself and referenced questions that she posed in an email sent to Mrs. Ernst and Ms. Gimeno on 10/26. She provided additional detail on the request to have the purchase and construction of an Amish Pole Barn in the maintenance/storage area of Historic Cold Spring Village be considered an eligible activity under the Open Spaces Program.

Closed Session: The Board entered Closed Session at 12:20 per a motion by Mr. Byrne, seconded by Mr. Craig, with all members in favor.

Return to Open Session: The Board returned to Open Session at 1:35 per a motion by Ms. Gimeno, seconded by Mr. Byrne, with all members in favor.

#### Decisions on Applications:

HP 20-03 – City of Cape May - Franklin Street School: Mr. Craig made a motion to recommend the application for funding in the amount of \$240,000, as requested, for the exterior renovation of the historic school block. Mr. Clemans seconded the motion. All members were in favor.

SFCE 20-02: City of Cape May – Phase 4 Lafayette Street Park: Mr. Clemans made a motion to defer the application based on consensus by the Board that there are key items that need to be addressed before full consideration is possible (environmental permitting, design, creative placemaking elements). Mr. Craig seconded the motion. All members were in favor.

PR 15-01 – Lafayette Street Park Phase 3 – Fountain: The Board reached consensus to have the City amend its Phase 3 application to include the fountain, with the understanding that the design should be modified to allow for sculpture to be added at a later date, should the City choose to do so. The Open Spaces Program is willing to contribute up to 2/3 of the cost of the fountain to a maximum of \$165,000.

SFCP 20-03– Dennis Township Bike Path Amenities: The Board reached consensus to have the Township work with Designing Local to modify the application to show the location of the amenities and to provide a sign package. Once the application has been revised with all requested information being included, the Board will take formal action.

Decision on Historic Cold Spring Village Request for Pole Barn: It was determined that the pole barn does not meet Open Spaces Program criteria.

Change in Meeting Date: Mr. Lomax confirmed that the November meeting date will be Tuesday, November 17<sup>th</sup> at 10 am via Zoom.

Motion to Adjourn: The Board adjourned at 1:45 pm, upon a motion by Mr. Craig, seconded by Mr. Clemans.