

**MENDHAM BOROUGH ECOSST
MINUTES OF REGULAR AND REORGANIZATIONAL MEETING
May 6, 2019**

Garabrant Center, 4 Wilson Street, Mendham, NJ

CALL TO ORDER & FLAG SALUTE

The regular meeting of the Mendham Borough ECOSST was called to order at 7:30 p.m. and the open public meeting statement was read into the record.

OPENING STATEMENT

Notice of this meeting was published in the *Star Ledger* and the *Daily Record* on in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act and was posted on the bulletin board of the Phoenix House.

ROLL CALL

Mr. Cascais	Present	Ms. Mundy	Absent
Ms. Golier	Absent	Ms. Gill	Absent
Mr. Sarno	Present	Mr. Castiglione	Present
Mr. Arena	Present	Mr. Nicolson	Absent
Mr. Sprandel	Present	Mr. Pace	Present
Ms. Barber	Absent		

Also Present: David Sharkey, Councilman
Lisa Smith, Land Use Coordinator
George Connolly, Advisory

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MINUTES

Chairman Arena asked for comments on the minutes of the regular meeting of April 1, 2019. There being no corrections, Mr. Cascais made a motion to approve the minutes as written and Mr. Sarno seconded.

ROLL CALL

In Favor: Mr. Cascais, Mr. Sarno, Mr. Arena, Mr. Castiglione, Mr. Pace
Opposed:
Abstain: Mr. Sprandel

The motion carried

DISCUSSION

Chairman Arena started with saying that the people on the committee are passionate about it and that there are novices and the group will have to use the assets that have been here for a while. He will continue to go back to them for information.

George Connolly was asked to be at the meeting to give history of Open Space. Mr. Connolly stated that the committee was established in 1998. The roll of the group was advisory to make recommendations to the Council regarding acquisition of land and how it was to be used. The Open Space Trust Fund is funded by a tax that produces approx. \$110,000/ year which comes in at the end of the year along with the \$80,000 payment for the repayment of the loan used for the Mountain Valley Dam. The fully authorized rate is not being charged. The group asked last year for the rate to be increased to the fully authorized amount. In the past the Committee generally steered toward the Open Space portion. In the future the Committee should steer towards Farmland Preservation portion because it doesn't cost anything other than time. Chairman Arena clarified that with Farmland Preservation the money comes for the State and the County which can be used to purchase the property. Mr. Connolly went on to explain that Councilman Andrus was the Council Representative and then he took the information back to the Council. Councilman Reilly will be the liaison going forward. Chairman Arena asked which properties were acquired with Open Space Funds. Mr. Connolly said that he has been involved since 2007 and the acquisitions were the Tranquility Garden in 2012 and Scott Farm in 2015. Mr. Connolly mentioned there was interest in acquiring the apple orchard off New St. The analysis on the soil showed arsenic in the soil and they were unable to purchase. Mr. Arena asked if there is a minimum size and Mr. Connolly stated that he didn't believe there was a minimum. Chairman Arena asked how were the properties found? Mr. Connolly said that it is by chance. Mr. Sarno asked once the property is purchased what happens to the taxes. Mr. Connolly said that there are no taxes on the properties acquired by the Borough. Mr. Sprandel said that there was a list of prioritized a list of properties but there is no follow through to becoming aware if the property goes up for sale. Councilman Sharkey suggested that a letter be sent to the homeowner to let the Open Space Committee know when they were selling. Chair Arena would like to see the inventory and Mr. Connolly said that he has the inventory and would email to Lisa. Chair Arena mentioned the spreadsheet of the accounting of Open Space. Currently there is \$217,616.94 in the Fund. Mr. Arena stated that there was approximately \$900,000 in the account then the Council decided to use the fund to pay for the dam at the Mountain View Pond so that the Borough didn't have to take out loans and they would replace it within 10 years. Funds would be found if a property became available for purchase. Mr. Connolly asked if this was in fact true and Mr. Sharkey said that Mr. Andrus, Finance Chair, suggested that the money be taken from the Open Space Fund for the Mud Hole. Chairman Arena also went on to say that the Committee would like to be informed if the Fund would be depleted and asked Councilman Sharkey if that can be done. Councilman Sharkey said that there was discussion to use the Fund for the tennis courts, maintenance of some of the fields and the Scott Farm. Mr. Cascais would like to know where the current list of properties that were funded by Open Space or the County. Mr. Connolly said that there is only 2 purchased by the Open Space Fund. He went on to ask what is the percentage the County would pay if a property became available. Mr. Connolly said that the County typically gives a 50% contribution. Chairman Arena asked if there is a contact at the County and Mr. Connolly said that it would be Barbara Murray. Mr. Sprandel is newly appointed the County Open Space Committee. Mr. Sprandel said that the number of applications that the County received has gone way down because there aren't many properties to acquire so they have expanded the ways that you can spend the money, one being trail development. Mr. Connolly expressed concern on the cost of the Scott Farm Grant application. Chairman Arena would like more transparency on expenditures regarding the Fund.

Chairman Arena asked if there was anyone at the meeting from the Environmental Committee that can give an update. Mr. Cascais said that he was from the old Environmental Committee. He said that their role was to review all PB and BOA applications, shredding day, consumer electronics recycling, and

stream cleanup. Mr. Cascais was a liaison for the Planning Board. Mr. Sarno asked how do they get copies of the applications for BOA and PB. Mr. Cascais said that they can go to the Phoenix House to review the applications. Chairman Arena asked if the Environmental Committee should be doing clean ups, shredding and green days to do in the community. Mr. Cascais said that is what they do along with advising the Council with recommendations on things that can be done, an example would be Styrofoam recycling and any environmental initiatives.

Chairman Arena asked for an update from Shade Tree. Councilman Sharkey stated that the DPW will be doing tree plantings soon. There is a schedule to plant every Spring and Fall. Approximately 350 seedlings were handed out and the Borough was awarded Tree City USA again for 2019. Chairman Arena asked if there were other things as a group that can be done. Councilman Sharkey said that awareness of the trees would be his idea. As a group they can identify hazardous tree and notify DPW so that they can be taken down. Members of the group can go to the Shade Tree seminar to get continued education credits for the Borough to be eligible for the Tree City USA and the Borough will pay for it. Mr. Cascais asked if there was a grant from the County for tree planting and Councilman Sharkey said he wasn't unaware of any.

Chairman Arena said that he would like a list of projects from each group prior to the next meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Mr. Sarno, seconded by Mr. Cascais and unanimously carried to adjourn at 8:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Smith

Lisa Smith

Land Use Coordinator

APPROVED _____