

OPEN SPACE PLANNING and OPERATIONS COMMITTEE
MINUTES

February 11, 2010

Present: Kathleen Kudla, Pam Meyers, Allison Norvil, Margaret Sabo and
Bill Karn

Absent: Mike Halper
Mike Costa (excused)

Guest: Vince Collebelli

Approval of Minutes: January 14, 2010

Chairman Karn opened the meeting public comment and introduced Vince Collebelli of the Homer Athletic Club and Homer Stallions who presented a proposal to lease 20 acres of open space property at the Purdy Farm for 50 year. The information presented included a tax map showing location of requested area, Literature from the referendum and copy of State Statues section regarding the lease of property. It states they will develop and maintain the property to suit all local and state ordinances and would expect the lease rate to be same as the township gives the local farmers. They propose to pay the lease fee from membership dues. They requested the recommended approved proposal be presented at the town board meeting on March 1, 2010.

Margaret Sabo and Pam Meyers who were very active members of the open space referendum gave a brief history of how the effort to preserve open space began, the goals and promises made.

The effort was a resident run program since State Statues limited Township participation. The group collected all the necessary signatures required to get on the ballot and held fundraiser to pay for the signs and literature.

They acknowledge there may have been some literature passed to appeal to certain groups and not necessarily the same promises made to all by some individuals in an effort to get the referendum passed.

Pam Meyers informed Vince she has requested the township attorney to review the State Statues, Mission Statement and other literature for a legal opinion.

Vince presented a very strong case as to the need of additional space, ability to find funding and why they believe the State Statues say it is possible.

After Vince Collabelli left Chairman Karn ask the committee to continue the discussion and voice their opinions since we it was not an agenda item we could not vote but could present our comments at the March 1, 2010 board meeting. Member Meyers pointed out the Purdy Farm lease is tabled and can cost the taxpayers if a decision is not made soon.

Kathy Kudla suggested since this is 12 to 13 years old we should proceed as a new request since we have many new residents, different circumstances and times have changed. The committee agreed we should look at all the problems and start from there.

Comments and concerns:

We need the report from the Township Attorney to determine what the law allows and if any change/amendment are made will a new public hearing be require?

The property is located in un-incorporated Homer Township and will require input from Will

County and based on this committees experience with the Tratina Farm this can be very time consuming and frustrating.

The property is zoned A-1 Agricultural District the intended use as a park/sports complex is probably not a Permitted or Special Use and will require a map amendment to E-1 Residential District (5 acres or larger) which permits parks. This will increase the tax rate. Does the Town Board want to permit this?

We do not know if private groups can apply for tax-exempt status?

The property is located on two Will County Roads and will require an entrance permit and possibly turn lanes. From our past experience this is not an easy request.

Will County possibly will require a drawing signed by a Registered Certified Architect and will require Will County development fees

The parking lot will be required to suit Will County standards for size and materials.

The Will County Health Department will require water and sanitary plans.

We believe the property is in a Fema flood plain depending on the type it may not be possible to be developed or will require a floodplain development permit.

Presently all Open Space property except Trantina pays taxes to support the schools, Library, Fire Districts and your salaries. The lease payments from the farmers pay this tax and maintain the property and ROW's.

The Homer Athletic Club is planning on paying the lease fee from the membership dues. Presently the Homer residents who live in New Lenox and Lockport pay a park department tax and have facilities similar to Homer Township.

This request was started when Homer Glen planned to purchase parkland and some one suggested the use of open space. Homer Glen will more than likely require a park department and taxes to support it.

Will there still be need for Homer Athletic Club to provide more park space if not what will happen to the lease payments? Also with the present economy are parents able to afford the cost of membership and will they be able to continue to support the sports groups?

People are worried about Homer Glen being able to afford the parks and maybe have to pass a municipal tax, where will the HAC get funds if membership drops?

The committee spent two and one half hours discussing this topic.

The next item on the agenda was the request for Forest Preserve trails though the Trantina Open Space and the use of the dog park parking lot for a trailhead.

Because of the long discussion on the open space lease we were not able to vote on this request because we have one member on temporary leave, one member was not able to attend and one member is a teenager and must leave no later than 9:30 because of the Homer Glen curfew so we lost our quorum.

We are concerned about the added traffic since the dog park parking lot is usually at or near capacity. If there are horse trailers parked to use the equestrian trail there is very little space available. If they use the north lot there is a safety issue with crossing 151st Street since there are no warning signs or crosswalk markings.

If we do permit this use then we should require in writing the Forest Preserve be responsible for the extra maintenance required based on an annual inspection. We should investigate the possibility of the Forest Preserve District constructing a parking lot near the present dog park lot if there is sufficient room.

Since this is a proposed trail we discussed other possible Trail Head locations including the Forest Preserve entrance on Gouger Road and on 159th there is an entrance where a car storage building was located.

One other suggestion was to have the trail circle back from point where they proposed to enter the School District 92 and the Trantina property back to the Cedar Road trailhead. We do not know if they have contacted School District 92 about the use of their property.

The committee recommends the Village/Forest Preserve remove from their map the addition of a Trail connection to Trantina until all issues and negotiations are resolved. We further suggest removing the dotted line from the end of the Forest Preserve loop that connects to Trantina and also take out the star on the map that shows an access point as "Existing Access Area at Dog Park".

Chairman Karn mentioned we have sent out the request for new roof quotes for the Trantina Farm House so hopefully we can discuss them at the next meeting.

Also mentioned the recognition plaque mounting board was almost complete so we may be able to get it to the engravers this month.

The meeting adjourned 11:10 PM

Minutes Approved by the OSPO Committee 3-11-10

Bill Karn Chairman