

DENNIS TOWNSHIP ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes: June, 2016

Chairman Penrose led the flag salute and Mr. Rebmann took roll. Mr. Castor, Ms. George, and Mr. Hoff were absent. The commission voted to approve the May meeting minutes, with Mr. Rosenthal abstaining.

Township Committee representative Salimbene introduced the guest speaker, Jack Gibson, Township Engineer.

Mr. Gibson began his presentation with background history of the county's Open Space program. He explained how in the past few years, that program has been expanded to include historical and recreational programs for grant funding consideration.

He described the township's application in progress, concerning two tracts of land adjoining the recreation center in South Dennis. Currently, the township has a 25 year lease on the land which is little used at present. The lease is in its 8th year.

The grant application seeks 100% funding for the purpose of expanding recreational areas and activities.

Mr. Gibson noted that he was in the process of appearing before various community groups, like the commission, hoping to get support as well as hearing suggestions and concerns. He has already spoken to the recreation "soccer committee".

The grant will cover two phases of work. The first will require \$400,000 which the township would initially bond with later reimbursement from the Open Space program. The principle item in this phase includes a dog park with separate areas for large and small breeds.

The fenced areas will have locked gates.

Ms. Leatherwood asked about the park's location to nearby houses and was told that the park would be located between a particular house near the site and houses on Sunny Lane. It will be connected to the field by a path. The dog park will be located away from the field.

The second phase of the project includes paths from Sunny Lane and Blue Heron Drive. Mr. Gibson indicated that the area includes one of the highest elevations in southern Cape May County and will serve as the site of a sledding hill. The grant will provide resources to build the hill higher its current elevation.

Ms. Leatherwood asked about possible access to the park from Halbe Lane. Mr. Gibson indicated that due to the layout of that area, an easement would be needed from a Halbe Lane property owner.

Ms. Leatherwood suggested adding volleyball courts to the project, allowing the recreation department to develop leagues for that particular sport. Mr. Gibson was receptive to including that idea to the mix.

Mr. Rebmann brought up the commission's ongoing effort to establish a memorial for the late Eileen Turner and asked if funding for that could be included in the grant application. Mr. Gibson suggested the commission submit a sketch of what it had in mind.

"There's plenty of room, pick a spot." He said.

Ms. Salimbene noted that another site at the municipal complex was already available. Mr. Rebmann acknowledged this but asked that the commission decide which site to pursue. Either site is acceptable.

Ms. Slotterback asked how many trees would have to come down for this project. She also expressed concerns about the time of year the trees would be cut down given the seasonal nesting patterns of birds. Ms. Salimbene replied that work can be scheduled to resolve that concern. Ms. Slotterback suggested October through December as the best time.

Mr. Rebmann asked that Ms. Slotterback's concern be duly noted and incorporated in the grant proposal.

Mr. McManus asked about the paving material for the walking paths and Mr. Gibson answered that the paths would be asphalt, about seven feet wide. Ms. Leatherwood asked about the surface of the dog park and was told it would be grass. The sled hill surface would also be grass, Gibson said in response to Mr. McManus question..

Mr. McManus asked if there would be lighting and Mr. Gibson answered that since the hours of operation would coincide with the recreation center, there would be no evening use.

Mr. Rebmann asked about the size of the sled hill. It will be 100 feet wide and 250 feet long and it will not be lighted.

Mr. Penrose asked about access from Blue Heron Drive and what would prevent people from parking along the street before entering the park. This is a problem at the Hagen Road entrance to the park.

Mr. Gibson suggested that signage was the only solution he could think of at that point. Ms. Salimbene added that signage needs enforcement back-up and indicated a need for constables.

The facility will be open to the general public, not just Dennis Township residents. This is a requirement of the Open Space program. Projects must be regional in scope, according to Mr. Gibson.

Next on the agenda, the commission set a date and time for its next work session at the municipal garden. Mr. McManus, Mr. Penrose, and Mr. Rebmann have finished mulching the garden at the museum and next is to reline the paths at the municipal garden with wood chips. The group will meet Sunday, July 10 at 1pm.

Commission also voted to locate the Turner Memorial at the municipal complex in the area on the left of the entrance next to the garden. Mr. Penrose pointed out that the location is visible to anyone entering the complex. Ms. Slotterback added that Ms. Turner was more involved with environmental matters than recreation so that site is more appropriate. Mr. McManus suggested that the Turner memorial will fit in well with other memorials already at the complex.

Mr. Rebmann will contact Justin Turner to inform him of the decision and commission members will examine the site when they work at the garden.. Mr. McManus noted that the water is on the garden and paths are ready for wood chips. Mr. Rebmann has been in touch with township Public Works to arrange for the material to be left at the entrance.

There being no other business, Mr. Penrose adjourned the meeting.