

**MINUTES
OPEN SPACE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
TOWNSHIP OF MONROE
MARCH 1, 2021**

The Meeting of the Monroe Township Open Space Advisory Committee was called to order by the Chairman, Len Fritz at 7:07pm. Adequate notice of this meeting was given as required by the annual notice of meetings.

Len Fritz led the Commission in the salute to our flag.

ROLL CALL

Present: Veronica Adepeju, Autumn Baidouri, Alan Dodd, Leonard Fritz, Jeffrey Graziano, Tracy Lavin, Tushar Patel, Brent Salvadori and Cncl. Carolann Fox.

Absent: Jonathan Garbowski

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Tracy Lavin made a motion to approve the minutes as submitted of the Open Space Advisory Committee Meeting of February 1, 2021. The motion was seconded by Autumn Baidouri and approved by all members of the Committee in attendance.

CORRESPONDENCE, REPORTS AND OTHER MATTERS

Len welcomed Tushar Patel as a new member of the Open Space Advisory Committee.

- **Liaison Reports**

Parks & Recreation – Brent reported that the Parks & Recreation Commission has decided to cancel the annual Music Festival and the Easter Egg Hunt. With regards to the Easter Egg Hunt, they have decided to do something similar to the Christmas parade to keep it within the COVID restriction guidelines. He said there is a Girl Scout, similar to an Eagle Scout, that wants to do a project at Owens Park and he is meeting with her and her parents to discuss the project. Alan reported, with regards to the Music Festival, the Parks & Recreation Commission voted to possibly hold it in September instead of June, depending on the COVID numbers at that time.

Zoning Board – Cncl. Fox reported, there is a lot going on but nothing that applies to Open Space at this time.

- **Sub Committee Report**

Autumn advised that the Community Relations Sub Committee, consisting of herself, Tracy, Veronica and Alan met via Zoom and created a list of objectives which she distributed via email to the members prior to this evening's meeting. She thanked Tracy, Veronica and Alan for meeting and spending the time to put together the objectives, noting there was a lot of good feedback. She spoke in reference to what was discussed at the meeting. Autumn noted, they really defined the objectives and goals of the Committee, which include, increasing public awareness and education about what Open Space is, fundraising for various projects, increase awareness and advocate for the bike trail connections. She believes, defining what is Open Space is important and once it is defined, it provides a new life to what the Committee is here for and redefines its purpose. Essentially, the Open Space Advisory Committee is

in place to recommend and advise how open space parcels are used within the Township. The Sub-Committee wanted to ensure that not all focus is on the bike trail because there are other projects/ideas that could potentially come to life. Autumn noted, the Sub-Committee would like to better understand the communication process that is involved with the various projects between Township Administration and the Open Space Advisory Committee. Autumn discussed the public awareness activities that are listed, which include media clips on social media, hosting a public zoom, social media strategies, designing communications for promoting activities and designing inclusive initiatives that promote the Open Space mission. Autumn is very happy with how the list of objectives turned out and she believes it will provide some more structure to what the Committee's goals are. Len explained, the lines of communication and the process involved with the various Open Space projects between Committee and Administration. Tracy asked what the Township's responsibility will be regarding the Sykes Lane property. Len advised, those details will be worked out when the plan for the property is presented to Council. A discussion followed regarding public outreach with regards to open space awareness.

- **General Discussion**

Len spoke in reference to the basin project that the Environmental Protection Commission is working on with Public Works. He mentioned, they are taking inventory of the basins within the Township to see which ones can be utilized for anything or if they can be left to become a naturalized basin. Len suggested that the Open Space Committee contact Public Works and the Environmental Protection Commission to see how the Open Space Committee may be involved in the project. Autumn stated, the Committee needs to set realistic expectations of what they wish to accomplish as a Committee.

Len spoke regarding Sustainable Monroe, noting they received a grant for a tire pump station that they would like to install at the parking lot property on Sykes Lane.

In reference to the Committee's goals and priorities, Len suggested that the Committee focus on the Sykes Lane property first, as the public is already aware of the property, followed by the trail around Duffy Park and then look at the bike path expansion.

A discussion followed regarding the Sykes Lane property and what the members see happening on the property. Len will send out a draft of ideas along with a map of the property to the members via email prior to the next meeting for review and further discussion.

Len asked the members if they would like to schedule the "caravan" around town, so all of the members will be able to have a better understanding of where the open space is throughout the town, to which all of the members present agreed. A discussion followed with possible dates, who was available and ways for the members to have instant communication as opposed to email with each other in between the monthly meetings.

Tushar asked, if the Committee had any fundraisers in place, such as a bench donation, to help fund the discussed projects. Tracy explained, the costs of the benches and the fundraising research she has done. A discussion ensued regarding different fundraising ideas.

Autumn spoke regarding the need for honey bees in the Township. Tracy stated, it would be a good project to incorporate at the Community Garden with Sustainable Monroe.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to discuss, Chairperson Leonard Fritz asked for a motion to adjourn. Autumn Baidouri made a motion to adjourn the Monroe Township Open Space Advisory Committee Meeting of March 1, 2021. The motion was seconded by Tracy Lavin and unanimously all in favor by all members of the Commission in attendance.

Respectfully submitted,

Jenn Harbison, Secretary

The next scheduled Monroe Township Open Space Advisory Committee meeting is Monday, April 12, 2021 at 7:00pm.

These minutes were prepared from excerpts of the tape-recorded proceedings of the Open Space Advisory Committee Meeting of March 1, 2021 and serve as only a synopsis of the proceedings.

Approved as submitted _____ Date _____
Approved as corrected _____ Date _____