

**MINUTES
OPEN SPACE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
TOWNSHIP OF MONROE
MAY 1, 2023**

The meeting of the Monroe Township Open Space Advisory Committee was called to order by the Chairman, Len Fritz at 7:00pm. Adequate notice of this meeting was given as required by the annual notice of meetings.

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

ROLL CALL

Present: Alan Dodd, Crystal Fox, Leonard Fritz, Mark Kozachyn, Tracy Lavin, Tushar Patel, Marjorie Sherrard and Cncl. Chelsea Valcourt

Absent: Anthony Bundi and Michael Silvestro

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Tracy Lavin made a motion to approve the minutes as submitted of the Open Space Advisory Committee Meeting of April 3, 2023. The motion was seconded by Tushar Patel and approved by all members of the Committee in attendance.

CORRESPONDENCE, REPORTS AND OTHER MATTERS

- Liaison Reports

Council – Cncl. Chelsea Valcourt stated that she spoke with Council regarding the Committee accepting donations and Council advised that yes, donations are acceptable.

Environmental Protection Commission – Jenn advised that the Commission spoke regarding the Music Festival and how they will be joining the Open Space Advisory Committee at their table for the event. A discussion followed among the members present regarding the Music Festival.

- Sykes Lane Lot

Marjorie reported that she has emailed several places regarding the committee obtaining wildflower seeds for planting at the Sykes Lane Lot and is awaiting the responses. She noted, she looked online and priced out five (5) pound bags that would be needed for the coverage of the area being planted and it will cost \$185.00 a bag. The seeds she is researching are indigenous to New Jersey, noting the website is Americanmedows.com.

- Connector Trails

Len advised there is nothing new at this time. Len spoke regarding the townhouses that are being built in town.

- Existing and New Topics for Discussion

Len noted, as previously discussed, the Mary Mazza Duffy Park potential trail will be “given back” to Parks and Recreation and Council. He feels that based on what is currently at the park and what goes on there with all of the athletic fields, it will be best for the Council and the Parks and Recreation Department to work out the plans.

Len spoke regarding the area located near the dog park, noting the area has been earmarked for more athletic fields. A discussion followed regarding the current athletic practice fields (specifically soccer) at Mary Mazza Duffy Park and the need for more practice fields.

GENERAL PUBLIC DISCUSSION

Crystal Fox made a motion to open the Public Portion. The motion was seconded by Tracy Lavin and unanimously approved by all members of the Commission in attendance. With no one wishing to speak and no public comment received, Mark Kozachyn made a motion to close the Public Portion. The motion was seconded by Tushar Patel and unanimously approved by all members of Commission in attendance.

OPEN DISCUSSION

Tour Around Town – Len spoke in reference to the Tour Around Town that took place on April 22nd, the places the Committee visited and their ideas for the areas. Alan spoke regarding the property located next to the dog park, noting that the Committee had discussed the possibility of creating an amphitheater and asked if the area is considered passive recreational. Len explained that passive recreational areas are areas with more trails, open woodlands and open fields. Len explained that land can be designated as open space and then later when its use is determined, it becomes passive or active. He went on to explain how land is designated. A discussion followed regarding the potential parking areas that could be used for the property. Alan noted, he feels the property would be well served as an amphitheater, to which everyone in attendance agreed. A discussion followed regarding the benefits of an amphitheater at the property next to the dog park along with the potential uses for Wagner Fields.

Music Festival – Len stated that he was unable to find the cards to be handed out. Alan suggested creating new cards. Marjorie suggested creating a QR code to be visible at the table that would provide a link to the open space information on the Township website instead of printing out new cards. Len explained what information was on the cards and a discussion followed regarding what information should be contained on the card. Len noted, he will send an email to all of the members with the information that was on the original card, so they can review it before creating the new card. Len said he will be at the table for the entire event and asked for volunteers to help at the table. Marjorie asked if there were any common questions that residents had asked in the past, to which Len explained. A discussion ensued regarding what is required of the Committee Members while hosting the table at the Music Festival and the talking points to engage with the public.

A discussion ensued with the members of the committee present regarding the various open spaces and available land throughout the township, the potential uses, and how those spaces can be developed.

Guest – Debra Valcourt-Sherman suggested purchasing flower bulbs to plant at Sykes Lane instead of seeds. A discussion among the members present regarding the planting of the wildflowers and possibly having volunteers from the high school who need community service hours help with the planting.

Alan asked about the percentage of taxes that is designated to Open Space every year, to which Len explained and a discussion ensued.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to discuss, Chairperson Leonard Fritz asked for a motion to adjourn. Crystal Fox made a motion to adjourn the Monroe Township Open Space Advisory Committee Meeting of May 1, 2023. The motion was seconded by Tracy Lavin and unanimously all in favor by all members of the Commission in attendance.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Harbison, Secretary

The next scheduled Monroe Township Open Space Advisory Committee meeting is Monday, June 12, 2023 at 7:00pm.

These minutes were prepared from excerpts of the tape-recorded proceedings of the Seniors Commission Meeting of May 1, 2023 and serve as only a synopsis of the proceedings.

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