

**MINUTES
OPEN SPACE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
TOWNSHIP OF MONROE
JUNE 12, 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, Tushar Patel, Marjorie Sherrard, Michael Silvestro, and Cncl. Chelsea Valcourt

Absent: Anthony Bundi, Mark Kozachyn, and Tracy Lavin

Guest: Mayor Wolfe

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Michael mentioned that the Roll Call needs to be amended to reflect that Anthony was absent from the May 1, 2023 Meeting and not present. Crystal Fox made a motion to approve the minutes with the discussed amendment of the Open Space Advisory Committee Meeting of May 1, 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**

Parks & Rec – Alan reported that the Music Festival was a success. Marjorie asked if the Commission has a record of how many people attended the event, to which Alan noted, he was unsure but he knows when they approach vendors, they advertise it is as approximately 10,000 people will be in attendance.

Council – Cncl. Chelsea Valcourt has nothing new to report at this time.

Environmental Protection Commission – Crystal noted, the Commission does not have meetings scheduled for the summer. She stated, they had a great turnout for the Music Festival, they gave away all of their giveaways and had a lot of good conversation with many residents.

- **Owens Park Expansion**

Len spoke in reference to the various ideas that the Committee has discussed over the years about what can be done with both the Genova and the Fera track, however, the recent conversations have been regarding the Owens Park Expansion. Mayor Wolfe stated, with regards to the where the Dog Park is located, he has spoken with the Township Engineers to find out what can be done with the property next to the Dog Park, noting unfortunately it looks like half of the area is wetlands that may not be able to be developed. The property across the street would make a nice connection to Duffy Park from Owens and almost to Church Street. The Township has been leasing out that property to a farmer, however, he has recently received notification from Green Acres that the Township is not allowed to continue leasing that property as a farm

year after year and that the property needs to be designated as a park. The Mayor said, he is looking at various things for the property, noting a music venue similar to Washington Township would be a wonderful addition to the township. He is going to meet with the engineer to discuss the property and what can be done, noting he will let Cncl. Valcourt know how the meeting goes so that she can bring his findings back to the Committee. A discussion followed regarding the property, how it became township-owned and the potential uses. Mayor Wolfe spoke in reference to the old 4H fairgrounds, noting he is researching if it is being given back to the township and if so what can be done there. A discussion followed regarding the property. Len spoke regarding how land can be mitigated for wetlands. The Mayor noted, how it would be beneficial to the township if the parks and trails could be connected and spoke in reference to the same. A discussion followed regarding the connector pieces of property, the benefits of having an outside theatre in the township and possible funding sources for any potential projects. Mayor Wolfe thanked the members of the Committee in attendance for volunteering their time, serving the town on the Committee.

At this time, Mayor Wolfe was excused from the meeting.

OPEN DISCUSSION

Alan questioned what constitutes land as wetlands and if there needs to be a certain amount designated as wetlands. Len explained that wetlands is determined by conditions, nothing else, noting the 3 conditions, fauna (wildlife/animals), flora (plants), and soils. Len explained how land can be mitigated as wetlands. A discussion followed regarding the wetlands and how properties are determined to be mitigated for wetlands purposes.

Marjorie asked who is supposed to be monitoring the various areas to ensure everything is being handled properly so that the Township does not receive any violations. Len explained how Wagner field became township-owned property. He noted, he is unsure how the property became considered Green Acres. A discussion followed regarding the various properties throughout the township and how they are designated.

Len spoke regarding the Sykes Lane property, noting the Committee had previously spoken about the American Meadow seed mix. He researched the needed information and passed it on to the Township to order back in May and after no response, he asked the Township not to place the order at this time. A discussion followed regarding the seeds, when to order them and the best time to plant them. Len mentioned possibly having local organizations plant the seeds in order to obtain community service hours, to which everyone in attendance agreed. Len will follow up with his contact at the Board of Education for recommendations on contacting the school.

Len spoke in reference to the Music Festival and how only one member in attendance, Crystal Fox worked the table with him during the event. He noted overall it was a very good event and there was a lot of community contact. Crystal spoke regarding the various giveaways that the Environmental Protection Commission had for the event. A discussion regarding the Music Festival followed.

Len suggested, moving forward, the Committee will need to begin coordinating the seeds to be planted in the fall, to which everyone in attendance agreed. A discussion ensued regarding the area where the seeds will be planted.

Cncl. Valcourt noted, she was approached by an organization that is interested in installing blue bird boxes along the bike trail. The organization will handle everything required with the installation. Len

advised that permission to install the boxes will need to come from Council with the recommendation from the Open Space Advisory Committee.

Jenn notified the members present that the July meeting will take place on Monday, July 10th and not on the first Monday of the month, due to the 4th of July holiday.

GENERAL PUBLIC DISCUSSION

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

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to discuss, Chairperson Leonard Fritz asked for a motion to adjourn. Michael Silvestro made a motion to adjourn the Monroe Township Open Space Advisory Committee Meeting of June 12, 2023. The motion was seconded by Crystal Fox 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, July 10, 2023 at 7:00pm.

These minutes were prepared from excerpts of the tape-recorded proceedings of the Seniors Commission Meeting of June 12, 2023 and serve as only a synopsis of the proceedings.

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