TOWN OF SOUTHEAST OPEN SPACE ADVISORY BOARD MINUTES
MARCH 28, 2007
TOWN HALL

Present: Councilman Paul Johnson, Kerry Cunningham, Cherie Ingraham, Mildred Nugent, Don Burrows, Ann Fanizzi, Angelo Matra

Not Present: Jim DiBella

Residents Present: Cathy Croft; Matt Neuringer

Time: 7:45 PM

A. Report by Angelo Matra

1. Financial Status - Angelo reviewed the status of funds remaining in the account. Need to contact Referendum Finance Committee. Report must be filed in June. Suggestion to use some funds to mitigate mailing costs accrued by Trust for Public Land. Tabled.

2. UJA Acquisition - According to Angelo, resolution adopted by the Town Board for the acquisition of the UJA property did not reflect the actual resolution adopted by the Advisory Board which approved continued discussions for purpose of acquisition but did not formalize actual purchase.   He stated that we had criteria but did not use it.

Explanatory letter of apology sent via e-mail by Supervisor John Dunford as to course of action taken by the Town Board with respect to the UJA acquisition and Resolution adopted by the Town Board distributed to the Advisory Board.

In response to several questions raised by the Board, Paul Johnson stated the following: that the property came to the Town Board's attention in December after the November Open Space Referendum had passed; that the property was not on tax rolls; that if option to purchase held by TPL expired on March 31st, then the property would have been available for purchase by private developers. Angelo emphasized the importance of process and expressed his disappointment that even though the Board was favorably disposed toward the acquisition of the UJA property, it had not been advised of the Resolution. In the end," it didn't do what it was established to do." However, Mr. Johnson indicated that ideally the Board would have been consulted but that given the urgency of the matter, that the action of the Town Board was appropriate since the role of the Board was advisory in nature.

Lastly, it was agreed that commercial property would be added to the criteria already adopted by the Board to govern acquisitions and that such property should be prioritized as to whether tax-exempt or not.

3. Advisory Board Minutes - As secretary to the Board, Angelo had submitted all minutes to Mary Rhuda and Dick Honeck. He took exception to characterization made at the Town Board meeting, which implied that since the minutes were not online, the Board's deliberations were not open for public review.

Future procedure: All minutes would be submitted to Councilperson, Lorraine Mitts for inclusion online.

4. Leveraging of Open Space Funds - Ann then discussed the need to find ways to leverage funds since so many properties were available for development - according to

Town Assessor, Bill Ford approximately 5,100 acres were vacant land. Several options were open i.e. Community Preservation Fund, which would impose an additional tax on buyers of property; conservation easements; development rights.

     A. Biodiversity Corridors - At this point, Cathy Croft (resident) mentioned the establishment of biodiversity corridors and Cherie and Ann discussed the Westchester County experience and Jim Nordgren's pivotal role. It was agreed that Ann would contact Mr. Nordgren and invite him to the next Open Space Advisory Board meeting.

5. Ryder Farm - Cherie shared with the Board a conversation with David Weber concerning the status of Ryder Farm and possible Advisory Board involvement. It appeared that the family was exploring avenues to preserve the property. Conservation easement or donation to Land Trust was mentioned. Cherie said that the family usually held formal meetings every two months. The Board indicated that more specific information was needed before the Board could fully discuss the issue.

6. Request to Bill Ford to submit to the Board tax parcels of all land over 20 acres. The Board agreed to invite him to our next meeting in April.

Meeting Adjourned: 8:55 PM

Respectfully Submitted
Ann Fanizzi
Temporary Secretary.