

MAURICE RIVER TOWNSHIP

SPECIAL MEETING

Conference Call with NJDEP – Sapello Easement

Thursday, April 4, 2019 at 10:30 am

This meeting has been advertised in accordance with the statutes of the State of New Jersey.

Present: J. Roy Oliver, Mayor
Bill Ashton, Committeeman
Denise L. Peterson, Municipal Clerk

Call to Order & Pledge of Allegiance

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Oliver at 10:30 am and the pledge of allegiance followed.

Roll Call: Mr. Oliver – Present
Mr. Whildin – Absent
Mr. Ashton – Present

NJDEP Representatives: **Kerry Kirk-Pflugh, Local Relations**
Ray Bukowski, NJDEP Assistant Commissioner
Judeth Yeany, NJEP Green Acres
Robin Madden, NJDEP Assistant Commissioner

The purpose of this meeting is a conference call with representatives from various NJDEP departments to discuss rescinding the conservation easement on the Sapello Foundry property.

Discussion:

1. Rescinding of the conservation easement on the Sapello Foundry property.

Kerry Kirk-Pflugh opened by inviting Mayor Oliver to provide a synopsis of the land and what work has been done to date.

Mayor Oliver explained that this property was entered into the LPU program as a way to get money into the township. The property subsequently was then entered into the Brownfields with Assessment and Cleanup grant funds being obtained through USEPA to remediate the property. The contaminated soils were removed and disposed of. Presently the township is seeking HDSRF grant funds to characterize the building materials, and demo the old foundry building with possible reuse of the block if not contaminated. The metal will be scrapped. A fence surrounds the site area previously deemed contaminated to prevent trespassing.

Mayor Oliver explained the township would like to use this property to two things: one is a soccer field for the school – this would be on the back half which is not within the ‘contaminated’ area and the second is for relocation of the existing recycle center which processes brush and leaves for mulch available to the residents. Mayor Oliver explained that presently MRT is 56% tax exempt with over half the township being located in the Pinelands. The current location of the recycle center is prime property for redevelopment and a business opportunity.

Mayor Oliver further explained that another use would be a back exit for the school onto Weatherby Road as the new traffic signal on Route 47 has presented a safety issue for buses leaving the school. Mr. Oliver explained that without rescinding the easement all three of these projects are held up and NJSA 13:8 allows for rescinding of conservation easement at the commissioner’s discretion.

Ray Bukowski explained there are factors that need to be taken into consideration. Judeth Yeany asked the amount of acreage needed for the soccer field. Mr. Oliver stated 2 acres would be deeded to the school. Mr. Bukowski suggested leaving the property under the township ownership with an agreement with the school to allow for more public use.

It was questioned whether the recycling center (mulching center) would be permitted in a Pinelands area; this needs to be verified.

Mr. Bukowski suggested that the best course of action would be to leave the area for the soccer field under the conversation easement and then questioned if under 1 acre would suffice for the recycle center. This would allow a more likely scenario for the state to do a partial rescind for the area under 1 acre (.9 acre). Mr. Oliver will check with PW to see if .9 acre would suffice for the recycle center relocation.

In synopsis the township needs to verify that .9 acres would suffice for the recycle center, needs to verify that Pinelands will allow the recycle center. If these points are verified then the request to state would be for a partial rescind on the area of .9 acres for the recycle center and then the state will memorialize the soccer field/public park under the conservation easement for 4.1 acres as 'public use'.

Conference Call Ended

Mayor Oliver contacted Steve Hagemann, PW Supervisor, who confirmed that .9 acres should work for the recycle/mulching center.

Mayor Oliver contacted Tiffany CuvIELLO-Morrissey, Township Planner, to inquire if she had any information pertaining to Pinelands opinion on use of the Sapello property. Tiffany stated she had previous communications with Sue Grogan at Pinelands regarding the use of the Sapello property and believed that they were not opposed to relocation of the recycle center to the property as mulching of brush and leaves falls within their scope of use. Tiffany also stated that as she recalled the site had 'prior use' and was located in a 'village area' which contributed to the allowance of relocation of the recycle center to this site. Tiffany will reach out to Sue Grogan at Pinelands to confirm this information and will let Mayor Oliver know the results.

Note: dependent on the results of Ms. CuvIELLO-Morrissey's conversation with Pinelands a letter may need to be sent to Pinelands.

Denise L. Peterson, Municipal Clerk