

OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE Meeting Notes

March 13th, 2025 – The Stable 7:00PM

PRESENT: Jim Bostler, Matt Lindenberg, Frank Mortimer, Alex Pastore, Ralph Curry, Jim Van Goor, Katie Frey – Parks and Recreation Rep

Summary

The meeting was very positive as there was movement on several long-term issues. Key upcoming events include the 2025 Park Walks, the Daffodil Festival and Earth Day Fair and continued movement on the diversion issue. Adding the tax referendum issue to the November ballot was also discussed. The Open Space Committee (OSC) also received tentative approval of moving forward on the NY/NJ Trail Proposal which entailed an inventory of needs for the current trails in key parks.

The meeting notes will remain topical only and will not go into great details about conversations, etc. Also, the notes will stress follow-ups and the appropriate person who is responsible.

Topics and Follow-ups

I. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

II. Approval of February Meeting Notes

The February meeting notes were approved with the addition of Ralph Currey present at the February meeting.

III. Committee Membership Status

The status of the committee membership is still one volunteer short. Ralph Currey has graciously continued as a member to fill the void which we hope to fill soon.

IV. Liaison Reports

- Village Council
 - Frank Mortimer summarized the Village Council issues as they pertain to the OSC. They will be addressed in the succeeding issues.
- Parks, Recreation and Conservation Board {PRC}
 - The NY/NJ Trail Conference proposal was accepted. Budget allocation approval is still needed.
- Fields Committee
 - Kate Frey from PRC briefed us on the Fields Committee accomplishments. The Hawes Field improvement mentioned in February is on pace for a May 28th opening.
- Planning Board
 - Jim Van Goor was introduced as the new liaison between committees. We look forward to his future insights regarding the Planning Board.

V. Green Acres Diversion/2024 Progress/2025 Plan/Frank Mortimer

Frank updated the committee on the progress on this issue. March 22nd was a key date stressed at last month's meeting for approval of two appraisals needed to finalize this issue. Happily, the appraisals were done ahead of the scheduled date. The new information will be forwarded to the appropriate state contacts. The committee is still looking for a September completion date.

VI. Schedler Park Property/Update

The archeological digs conducted at the park found nothing of significance. Soil studies are almost complete, enabling plans for park development to move forward. {Same as last month's notes.}

VII. Town Garage/Discussion/ Update

The cleanup and wait time of this property will take approximately two years as currently planned. Tentative OSC plans were agreed to regarding this property and a tie-in with the OSC Daffodil/Earth Day involvement. Pictures and a suggestion box regarding the future use of the property will be added to the booth. The committee members also agreed that OSC should sponsor a community event to discuss what should be done with the property after the cleanup. Frank will communicate with the Village Council on our wishes.

VIII. Event Suggestions/Participation

Like last year, the OSC will sponsor Park Walks in 2025. A tentative schedule was shown with individuals responsible for the walk. Nothing was finalized as some individuals indicated they would not be available or could not conduct the event for other reasons.

The OSC will have a booth at this year's Daffodil Festival and Earth Day Fair. We will build on last year's content and focus on Open Space and the protection of our water, which is this year's theme. Additionally, we will have the Towne Garage Suggestion box and the content showing the value of Open Space versus over development.

IX. New Business

The two issues discussed were the Open Space Assessment and Referendum and the NY/NJ Trail Conference Center proposal.

The Open Space Assessment currently is 0.5 cents per \$100 evaluation. This has not changed in over 20 years. The committee discussed the possibility of raising the assessment to one cent per \$100 evaluation. Jim B will write a letter to Keith Kazmark as to the reasons necessary for the increase and why this initiative should be added to the November ballot for a vote by Ridgewood citizens.

The NY/NJ Trail Conference proposal for a Trail Plan and workshops for 4 parks was discussed and has not been finalized. The trail plan would be for a walk through the parks and a document featuring trail design comments on each trail, emphasizing deficiencies and recommended improvements. Volunteer Training Workshops would also be developed to train volunteers in helping to implement the improvements required at each municipal park.

The 4 parks are Habernickel, Grove Park, Kings Pond/Gypsy Pond and Twinney Pond Park.

X. Future Meetings

Jim will be updating the Property Acquisitions list. This will include updating the value, criteria and any new properties that may be added. We agreed this will require a separate meeting in the future.

XII. Adjournment

Next Meeting: Open Space Thursday, April 10th, 2025 – Time 7:00 PM – at The Stable

Submitted By: James Bostler – OSC Committee Secretary/Chairman