

The **June 2, 2014 Special Meeting** of the Borough Council of the Borough of Spring Lake Heights, Monmouth County, New Jersey, was called to order by Mayor Gavino Maccanico at 7:15 p.m. and opened with a silent reflection and Pledge of Allegiance.

Present:

Mayor Gavino Maccanico
Councilwoman Patricia Cindea
Councilwoman Sara King
Councilman Thomas O'Brien
Councilman James Shuler
Councilman Christopher Tienken

Absent:

Councilman Thomas Vorbach

Also Attending:

Joseph J. Delaney, Jr., Administrator/Borough Clerk
Scott Kenneally, Esq., Borough Attorney
David Petriken, Police Chief
Joseph May, P.E., Borough Engineer
Shawn Heeter, Recreation Director

There were 66 members of the public present.

STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE. The Clerk reported that this Special Meeting was being conducted pursuant to the requirements of the N.J. Open Public Meetings Act that notice was sent to the Coast Star; posted on the bulletin board in the Municipal Building and on the Borough website.

Mayor announced that Councilman Tienken will make a presentation and then council will have a question period and then the public is invited to speak. Each person will have 5 minutes to speak. Mayor added that Councilman Tienken and the Recreation Group met on 2 previous occasions, both of those meetings where very productive.

PRESENTATIONS

- Recreation Facilities Working Group – Allaire Road & Fletcher Property Parks

Councilman Tienken spoke about the parks in town in particular the Allaire Road Park. Although this meeting is about Allaire Road Park the committee recognized that other Open Space in town could use some updating, that is something that will be looked at in the future. The committee was a mix of individuals: Mayor Maccanico, Chief Dave Petriken, Bd. of Ed. member, Eric Gardner, Bd. of Ed Superintendent, James McCarthy, Bill Thermann, Youth Football, Fairway Mews Association Representative Brian O'Gibney, Environmental Chair, Kat Crippen, Beautification Committee Deidre Fallon, Little League member, Tom DeFazio, Recreation Director, Shawn Heeter, Joe May and Jay Delaney. Residents in the committee included Gaylen and Donald Nolan and former Mayor Elwood Malick. The goal was to form ideas for our Open Space areas and provide them to council for consideration.

The committee met on 2 occasions and focused on Allaire Road Park. Mr. Tienken noted that there is a lot of passion about our parks and rightfully so. He asked those present to listen to all of the ideas and he hoped that this could be a collaborative open community discussion. From the groups meetings 4 ideas were formed based on needs. Those needs included a multipurpose field, passive recreation, overall beautification of the area, environmental concerns and recreation opportunities for all residents.

Councilman Tienken spoke about several options:

- Maintain the Grove and restore to the original usable space. This would include a walking path, nature walk, bird watching and tree preservation.

- Develop multipurpose fields for both children and adults. Mr. Tienken added we have a growing recreation population in the town. Presently, our soccer and lacrosse teams have to use fields outside of town. The field in the front is substandard for softball.

Councilman Tienken added that the entire committee wanted to make sure that we had clean, maintain and usable space. There was a wide range of ideas that came from many sources such as a BMX trail, ice rink, roller hockey ring and a stickball area.

- The Fletcher property, currently that area is having cleanup work done. This includes removal of underbrush and tree preservation. Councilman Tienken invited Kat Crippen to speak about ideas for this area.

Ms. Crippen stated that when the park was purchased several ideas where presented by the Environmental Committee included a parking area, a picnic area with game tables, a community garden, a butterfly garden, walking path, stations for bird watching. Since this was purchased with Open Space Grant money there is limitations as to what could be done with the space. She added that there is a large population in town that are not able to take advantage of the facilities as they exist. The plans for Fletcher were to keep it passive recreation. Councilman Tienken stated that the committee felt that should be included with whatever else is decided about the entire park area

Councilman Tienken asked Gaylen Nolan to speak about the option of maintaining and restoring the grove area. Mrs. Nolan spoke that after "Sandy" there was a tremendous loss of trees there, the neighbors of the park have had an increase in both noise and light pollution. We would like to restore the area. She added that this is not the place for a multipurpose field; she felt the area behind the school would be a better location.

Councilman Tienken spoke about the second option of a multipurpose field. We have a growing recreation program, we do not have a functioning softball field, it is not regulation size. The girls in town do not have the same quality field as the boys. Recreation soccer on occasion has to travel to other towns to use their fields. He added that the Fletcher property would be the passive recreation area, it's already been started to refurbish that. Some would ask why not use the school, the borough does not own the school. We have used the property; we do have a good working relationship with the school. Mr. Tienken asked Mr. Thermann to speak additionally on this option. Mr. Thermann stated that the multipurpose field is a great option. He felt having areas for active recreation programs available to our children gives them an avenue to participate in the programs and stay safe.

Councilman Tienken added another option. The existing field would be move back into part of the grove area destroyed, and buffers to the back. It would mean creating a regulation softball field. Mr. DeFazio, Little League Representative. He stated that existing front field has deteriorated over the years, the drainage is terrible, and this means that games are cancelled. He added the area known as the grove is a bad area, the damaged trees, poison ivy, it's not a healthy environmental. The idea was to replant grove to the front field and create a softball and T-ball field in the rear. He added that there would not be an increase in traffic. Councilman Tienken added this does not solve the issue of a multipurpose field problem.

Councilman Tienken added that the last option was to restore the grove, upgrade the existing field to a regulation field which means we would need to take some area of the grove. Fencing would have

to be added.

Mayor Maccanico asked council members for questions.

Councilman O'Brien asked if the multi field would be grass or turf? It was going to be grass. Do you know how many trees would need to be removed to move the field to the back? Mr. Delaney Stated that there has been an inspection of the property has been done, a copy given to council tonight. It indicates that about 45 trees on the entire site should be removed with a number that need to be inspected more closely via aerially. Mr. Delaney read the report; it stated that the trees were safety hazards.

Councilman Shuler noted that he realizes that the facilities are needed but couldn't Ocean Road Park be more utilized. Mr. DeFazio stated that the softball field there is also undersized. Mr. Delaney reported that there are some improvements on schedule for both facilities. This includes upgrading the playground equipment, re-surfacing the tennis and basketball courts and drainage improvements to the front field area and playground area. Ocean Road Park will have upgrading to the bathrooms and resurfacing the basketball court.

Councilwoman King asked the cost of the cleaning up of the grove and tree removal? Ms. Crippen added that the environmental committee had someone come out and review the area; he cautioned that clearing that area might not be a good idea and would be costly. Mrs. King recalled that this idea for a multipurpose field was discussed last year, at that time there wasn't going to have enough room. Mr. May added that field was for softball and the utility building would be moved to add footage. Mrs. King added that the driveway around the field would be coming out, Mr. May replied yes. Mr. May added that it would have to be relocated. This plan is just a conception, a possible option. Mrs. King expressed concern about the buffer protecting the neighbors. Those residents are very concerned. There was discussion about the grove and buffers and what would be removed and or replaced. She asked why there weren't options presented for improvement to be done in all the parks.

Councilman Tienken wanted to express that progress needs to made, an example is our recreation soccer. Parents could be experiencing children playing at different fields at the same time.

Councilwoman King asked how much property does the Borough own outside our building, Mr. May replied about 25 feet.

Councilwoman Cindea asked if the options moving the field back, if home plate was moved would it protect more of the grove, Mr. Tienken replied that was looked at but concern was for foul balls.

There was discussion by council and members of the public about the variations in the proposals.

Councilwoman Cindea stated that there are so presently several fields in town.

Kat Crippen pointed out that Open Space property is open to the public but the borough could book certain hours for their use, restrictions could be put in place on the use. There are a lot of out of town users.

Councilwoman Cindea asked if FEMA would pay for the grove area since it occurred during "Sandy" and she inquired the cost to replace the trees. Mr. Delaney replied that the borough did receive funding from FEMA but he couldn't really state the cost of replacing them. Mrs. Cindea

also expressed concern for an increase in traffic in the area with an expansion. Mrs. Cindea asked if consideration was given to purchase the property from the school.

PUBLIC COMMENT

- Ed McGuirk 1208 Allaire Rd. he wanted to point out that Allaire Road Park should be referred to as Joseph Robertson Park. He has lived here for 37 years; he gave a history as to the ownership of the Fletcher property. He also reviewed the steps that were taken to take down the buildings after the borough purchased the property. He expressed his concern for his quality of life.
- Margaret Melchione 2 Jeanette Ct. suggested that the committee reconvene to look at Ocean Road Park and what the costs to the projects would be. She thought that the property at Ocean Road Park is underutilized. She reminded council of the petition she brought forward; may be this should be on the ballot.
- Bob Cindea 309 Twelfth Ave. is a member of Environmental Committee he suggested that a landscape architect be brought in to review for possible alternatives for park planning based on the space that we have. He added this was a good discussion and a great start.
- Don Nolan 1022 Allaire Rd. stated that he is a Phys Ed teacher in Little Silver. He felt that the existing field at the school should be upgraded and used. Scheduling between the school and recreation could be worked out. He expressed that if lights are installed for a new field, trees going in now will not protect the residents in that area. He pointed out that poison ivy is in that grove, the town needs to do a better job cleaning that area.
- 1004 Allaire Rd. agrees the youth athletic program is growing; he's concerned for the light installation. There was a reference to Central Park, "I think removing the trees we will not look like that park.
- Rita Murphy 2014 Hwy 71 asked the size of what would be the new field, she expressed that she was in favor of the school option. It's close to the Police Dept., and away from the road. She offered that there isn't enough recreation for the disabled.
- Brian Brendle 728 Wall Rd. asked why St. Catherine uses Ocean Rd but we can't, this doesn't make sense. He felt that the school field should be used. He suggested that we should take care of the existing fields before moving forward to develop a new one.
- Kat Crippen 564 Atlantic Ave. wanted to offer that the Zoning Board had an application before them which has since been withdrawn. This property should be considered for community recreation.
- Gaylen Nolan 1022 Allaire Rd. asked if the Little League leases that property and if they maintain it, Mr. Delaney replied yes. She felt that the park does need to be cleaned up, the poison ivy is overgrown, and she thanked Mr. Tienken for this discussion.
- Shawn Heeter, Recreation Director that these has been an interest by Manasquan to start a lacrosse program in the Heights. He wanted to point out that recreation is for all age groups.
- Betty Sturdy 47 Maple Dr. pointed out that she could hear Wall Raceway at her home. She stated that the taxpayers have rights, she felt that we should utilize what we have, and she felt that Allaire Road Park is the worst location for an expansion.
- Jim McCarthy 806 Lake Ave. expressed his concern for the grove; it is not a safe area right now. He liked the idea of the ideas for the Fletcher property. He encouraged council members to do this right.
- Pam DiSalvo 32 Wyckham Rd. she stated that she has lived here since 1978. This area is not just a Little League Field that area is for our children; we need to make this a great place to go. She felt that there was some negativity in the meeting. My grandson plays on the front field, it is dangerous, there a lot of holes. She felt the option to expand the park was wonderful. She asked about the improvements to the drainage and when that would be started, Mr. Delaney stated that is

currently being scheduled.

- Marianne 820 Pitney Dr. our kids take pride in our town, the trees in the park are great, the grove is great but her children have gotten poison ivy. She was concerned about the cost of these projects. Having the fields for the kids to play sports is a positive.

Councilwoman Cindea asked if there is a safety issue at the grove that it should be sectioned off. Mr. Delaney replied that trees that have been identified that need to be removed will be done. At this time there has not been an indication given that there is imminent danger.

- Maureen Carol 808 Allaire Rd. asked that some do not know what the property the Borough has and what the costs of any of these projects. She suggested obtaining an expert to report back about accurate analysis of the land. Her son played at that park and would always get poison ivy that needs to be addressed.

Mr. Delaney expressed that the hope would be before spending any money that he's optimistic that the options could be narrowed.

- Erik Gardner 707 Ocean Rd. thanked Mayor and Council in particular Mr. Tienken for his leadership on this forum. Overall we know something has to be done, progress should continue. He pointed out that recreation is expanding contrary to comments made. As a part of the committee, he stated several options were discussed at length. He commented that he loves the history of the grove and we should work towards bringing the history of the park back including the name.
- Heather Nolan 1009 Allaire Rd. felt that there is a multipurpose field; we also need to protect what we have.
- Margaret Melchione 2 Jeanette Ct. stated that she didn't feel this was a negative meeting, she felt that other options should be reviewed.
- Kat Crippen 564 Atlantic Ave. mentioned that Mayor and Council at a meeting back in 2008/2009 there was a resolution that there was to be a combination field at Ocean Road Park.
- Virginia Upton 91 Walnut Dr. Someone stated that we pay for maintenance at Ocean Road Park, Mr. Delaney clarified that it is a borough owned facility so we maintain it but it was developed with Green Acres funding so it is open to all residents of New Jersey. But we do have the ability to schedule its use.
- Ed McGuirk 1208 Allaire Rd. stated that at one time there was a flood at the Fletcher property; he thought the soil should be tested before moving forward on any project. He added that when the Fletcher's lived there, Mr. Fletcher used the barn for his equipment; there may be soil contamination there.

Mayor Maccanico closed the public session; without objection.

Mayor Maccanico asked council to relay which option they would like to propose. Councilman Tienken suggested that bringing a professional planner in may be the way to go. Councilman Shuler added that both parks should both be reviewed. Councilwoman King stated that she and Councilman Shuler attended Youth Government Day, there program was about recreation and the parks in town. Their comments included concern for fixing the tennis and basketball courts, fixing the fields and updating the playgrounds. Yes, having someone come in to do an analysis, I think improving what we have should be first and then see about moving forward with new projects. Councilman Shuler asked Mr. May about the cleanup done in the back of Ocean Road Park but additional work is needed on the paths that are back there. Mr. Delaney reported that there are some limitations with DEP. Councilman O'Brien stated that he was in favor of someone coming in to review the area and make recommendations. Mayor Maccanico asked Mr. Delaney to move forward with that, Mr. Delaney stated that he would put together an RFP for professional services with the focus on our parks and recreation.

RESOLUTIONS

- **R2014-103**, approving the appointment of Public Works Department seasonal employee(s). Mr. O'Brien asked if this will be the last, Mr. Delaney replied yes. On a motion by Mr. Tienken, seconded by Mrs. Cindea, the resolution was adopted by the following vote:

Ayes: Mrs. Cindea, Mrs. King, Mr. O'Brien, Mr. Shuler, Mr. Tienken

Nays: None Abstain: None Absent: Mr. Vorbach

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, on a motion by Mrs. King, seconded by Mr. Tienken, the meeting was adjourned without objection at 10:05 p.m.


Janine Gillis, Borough Clerk

Approved: October 24, 2015