

**MEETING MINUTES**

**TOWNSHIP OF PARSIPPANY-TROY HILLS  
OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE  
REORGANIZATION AND SPECIAL MEETING ON MAY 22, 2020**

- I. Meeting was held virtually via the Zoho meeting platform on Friday evening, May 22, 2020, at 5:00 P.M.
- II. Meeting was called to Order at 5:06pm by Mayor Michael Soriano, and the following statement was read into the record:

**This is the reorganization and special meeting of the Township of Parsippany-Troy Hills Open Space Committee, being held virtually on Friday, May 22<sup>nd</sup>, 5:00PM. Adequate notice of this meeting has been provided in accordance with the requirements of the Open Public Meetings Law by filing the notice in the Office of the Township Clerk and by posting the meeting notice on the bulletin board at the Municipal Building. A legal notice appeared in the Daily Record on May 13, 2020. This meeting is being recorded.**

- III. Oath of Office administered to Mayor Soriano by Township Attorney James Lott:
  - a. Township Attorney James Lott stated that the Mayor, by ordinance, serves as Chair of the Open Space Committee. Mayor, please stand and raise your right hand;  
**I, Michael Soriano, do solemnly swear that I will support the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution of the State of New Jersey, and that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same, and to the Governments established in the United States and in this State, under the authority of the people, so help me God. I, do further solemnly swear that I will faithfully, impartially and justly perform all the duties of the office of Chairman of the Township of Parsippany-Troy Hills Open Space Committee to the best of my ability, so help me God.**
  - b. Township Attorney Lott stated that the appropriate certification will be signed with the Clerk’s Office at the first opportunity. Mayor, you are now free to administer the oath to the members of the Open Space Committee.

- IV. Oath of Office to be administered concurrently to the other Members by Mayor Soriano; Chandu Bhoraniya, Len Cipkins, Council President Michael dePierro, Cori Herbig, Ruth Palmeri, Jennifer Vealey:  
I, \_\_\_\_\_, do solemnly swear that I will support the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution of the State of New Jersey, and that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same, and to the Governments established in the United States and in this State, under the authority of the people, so help me God. I, \_\_\_\_\_, do further solemnly swear that I will faithfully, impartially and justly perform all the duties of the office of member of the Township of Parsippany-Troy Hills Open Space Committee to the best of my ability, so help me God.
  - a. Mayor Soriano stated congratulations to everyone, and thank you for committing yourself to continued service.

V. Roll Call

MEMBER	Present	Absent
Mr. Bhoraniya	X	
Mr. Cipkins	X	
Council President dePierro	X	

Mrs. Herbig	X	
Mrs. Palmeri	X	
Ms. Vealey	X	
Mayor Soriano	X	

- a. Also present; Jim Walsh, Superintendent of Parks & Forestry, James Lott, Township Attorney, and Michael Sifonios, Director of Parks, Forestry, & Recreation.

VI. Appointment of Susan Paz, Administrative Secretary to the Mayor, as committee secretary:

- a. Mayor Soriano asked, is there a motion to appoint Susan Paz, Administrative Secretary to the Mayor, as committee secretary? Motion made by Council President Michael dePierro, second made by Ruth Palmeri.
- b. Roll Call:

MEMBER	Aye	Nay	Abstain	Absent	Motion	Second
Mr. Bhoraniya	X					
Mr. Cipkins	X					
Council President dePierro	X				X	
Mrs. Herbig	X					
Mrs. Palmeri	X					X
Ms. Vealey	X					
Mayor Soriano	X					

VII. Nomination for Vice Chair for the year 2020:

- a. Mayor Soriano made a motion to nominate Chandu Bhoraniya for the position of Vice Chair. Is there a Second? Second made by Jennifer Vealey.
- b. As Board Secretary, Susan Paz will take the roll call on the nomination of Chandu Bhoraniya for the position of Vice Chair:

MEMBER	Aye	Nay	Abstain	Absent	Motion	Second
Mr. Bhoraniya	x					
Mr. Cipkins	x					
Council President dePierro	x					
Mrs. Herbig	x					
Mrs. Palmeri	x					
Ms. Vealey	x					x
Mayor Soriano	x				x	

- c. Mayor Soriano stated, Chandu, thank you very much and congratulations.
- d. Chandu Bhoraniya stated that he is honored to be vice chair and that he has served on the Open Space Committee before, and is glad to be back. This needs to be done for the town, and we are the guardians of the open space. He will do the best he can with everyone's help.

VIII. Communications and General Business:

- a. Mayor Soriano called upon Michael Sifonios, Director of Parks Forestry and Recreation, to review the Kosut Property.
- b. Michael Sifonios to review property:
- i. Tax Map of property on Knoll Road displayed for all participants to view.

- c. M. Sifonios stated that the property is decades in the making, and the township owns 3 properties that are similar in size. The property in question (highlighted in yellow, labeled as 7) is 5.44 acres. The owner passed away in March 2020. In the past, the owner was approached by developers and others interested in the land. Property is important because it unifies brings the whole area together, and combined would be 30 acres of open space. Backs up to New England Drive, which could be another access point.
  - i. Mayor Soriano stated that based on his review of the property, he does not believe New England Drive could be an access without major construction due to a drainage area. Would prefer the access to be from Knoll Road, not a residential area like New England Drive.
- d. M. Sifonios stated that together, the four properties would be owned by the township. In the top right of the map, there are 7 acres owned by the township, as well as the Knollwood School property.
  - i. Council President dePierro spoke to give some history on the property. We have been trying to combine the lots for approximately 20 years. The owner of the Kosut property was approached several times, but was holding out. The reason we wanted to purchase was because this is located in Lake Hiawatha, the most densely populated area in Parsippany, and we did not want developers to infringe upon the most densely populated area, so we were trying to buy it for years whether we use it or leave it as passive.
- e. M. Sifonios stated that the Mayor and he walked the property and it is a beautiful area, and it is very unique to have an area like this that is undeveloped.
  - i. Mayor Soriano stated that if we built a sports complex or baseball field so close to the Board of Education property that could be a real bonus for the BOE as well.
- f. M. Sifonios feels the possibilities are endless, and it would be great if we could purchase the property; great asset for the town.
- g. Mayor Soriano asks does any member of the committee have anything to add on the Kosut Property.
  - i. Council President dePierro stated that we did not talk about price.
    - 1. M. Sifonios stated that Tuesday morning there is an appointment to have an appraisal done on the property. Not sure of the turnaround time for the assessed value, but should be sometime next week.
    - 2. Council President dePierro asked why the Township Tax Assessor, Dan Cassese, couldn't perform the assessment.
    - 3. M. Sifonios stated that we need to utilize a Green Acres-approved appraiser, which Mr. Cassese is not a part of.
  - ii. Len Cipkins stated that, being a realtor who specializes in Parsippany, this is a no brainer. We don't want to give the property up to a developer, let's try to acquire the property at the appraised value and then do something with it or keep it passive. It is an outstanding parcel all together, which as Council President dePierro stated, the town has been trying to acquire for some time.
  - iii. Mrs. Herbig – no comment at this time
  - iv. Ms. Vealey stated she has been a member of the open space committee for a long time, and we've talked about this property, and she was on the board when we obtained the other properties, and it would be nice to see the final piece come together.
  - v. Mrs. Palmeri – no comment at this time
  - vi. Chandu Bhoraniya – need to remember that on this property you can only build one house, anything additional will need a variance. This is a great property, and we should take it, but that limitation gives the township an edge on negotiations.

- vii. Jen Vealey asked about plans from Justin Lizza that shows the lots. Mayor Soriano stated that was from an Engineers point of view, and the number of units as a subdivision could be placed on the land (6) would need to go before the planning board for approval. Len Cipkins stated that there are plenty of developers that would try to do that, as there is a lot of potential to make easy money there.

IX. Other Matters:

- a. Does any member of the committee have anything to add on any other topic?
  - i. No comments made.

X. Public Comment Period:

- a. Mayor Soriano asked is there a motion to open up the meeting to public comment? Motion made by Mr. Len Cipkins, second made by Mrs. Ruth Palmeri. Board Secretary can you please take a vote and please answer by saying aye or nay.
- b. Roll Call:

MEMBER	Aye	Nay	Abstain	Absent	Motion	Second
Mr. Bhoraniya	X					
Mr. Cipkins	X				X	
Council President dePierro	X					
Mrs. Herbig	X					
Mrs. Palmeri	X					X
Ms. Vealey	X					
Mayor Soriano	X					

- c. Mayor Soriano stated that the meeting is now open for any member of the public wishing to speak. Please raise your hand on the toolbar to indicate you'd like to speak. Please state your name and address.
  - i. Rich Milito @ 6 Patchbox Court stated he lives down the road from this property and has been excited over the years as each of the properties has been bought by the town to come together, and he agrees with the other members that this is a no brainer to purchase the property to bring all the parcels together.
- d. Mayor Soriano stated being that there is no other member of the public that wishes to speak, is there a motion to close the meeting to public comment? Motion made by Len Cipkins, second made by Ruth Palmeri. Board Secretary please take the roll call:

MEMBER	Aye	Nay	Abstain	Absent	Motion	Second
Mr. Bhoraniya	X					
Mr. Cipkins	X				X	
Council President dePierro	X					
Mrs. Herbig	X					
Mrs. Palmeri	X					X
Ms. Vealey	X					
Mayor Soriano	X					

XI. Discussion of next and future meeting date(s):

- a. Mayor Soriano stated we would like to have the next meeting later in the week of June 8 to discuss applying for the grant to help purchase this property. Would everyone have availability on either Wednesday, June 10 or Thursday, June 11?
  - i. Majority stated that either day after 5pm would work.

- b. Date set for Wednesday, June 10<sup>th</sup> at 5pm.
- c. The Pledge of Allegiance occurred at this time.
- d. Mayor Soriano acknowledged those that passed in honor of Memorial Day weekend and asked for a moment of silence.

XII. Adjournment

- a. Mayor Soriano asked is there a motion to adjourn the meeting? Motion made by Chandu Bhoraniya, second made by Ruth Palmeri. Board Secretary please take the roll call:

MEMBER	Aye	Nay	Abstain	Absent	Motion	Second
Mr. Bhoraniya	X				X	
Mr. Cipkins	X					
Council President dePierro	X					
Mrs. Herbig	X					
Mrs. Palmeri	X					X
Ms. Vealey	X					
Mayor Soriano	X					