

May 9, 2016

Attendees:

Mr. Butters
Mrs. O'Brien

Joan Heppert, Recording

Regular Meeting
of the
Russell Township Park Commission

Russell Township Town Hall

Call to Order:

- The regular meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m.

2016-26 Move to approve and sign the minutes from 4/11/16 as read was moved by Charlie Butters and seconded by Linda O'Brien.

Vote: Charlie Butters N, Linda O'Brien N. Motion tabled for corrections.

2016-27 Move to appoint Linda O'Brien as Chairperson was moved by Charlie Butters and seconded by Linda O'Brien.

Vote: Charlie Butters Y, Linda O'Brien Y. Motion unanimous.

Linda O'Brien gave some information regarding the history of the Park Board which was established in 1984 as a 1545 per the ORC, and the by-laws and goals were created. The work on acquiring the Modroo property started in 2007, and in 2011 a 1 mill parks renewal levy was voted on. The property is on 43.7 acres on Hemlock Road and does not include the house or the barn.

There was a brief intermission from Sam Matthews of the Russell Township Fire Department to get the room down to its fire marshal listed capacity of 73 people with allowed standing alongside the perimeters.

There was a brief discussion of the maintenance requirements of the Russell Uplands rebuilding of the bridge. Costs were believed to be under \$300. per Linda O'Brien who had walked the property with Michael Blades. The discussion of retaining Buckingham, Doolittle & Burroughs LLC was tabled at this time.

2016-28 Move to approve and sign check # 208, 216 and 217 dated 5/9/16 was moved by Charlie Butters and seconded by Linda O'Brien.

Vote: Charlie Butters Y, Linda O'Brien Y. Motion unanimous.

The public comments section of the meeting was opened with a two minute limitation.

- Barbara Berkely was supportive of maintaining the rural character of Russell Township and presented information from a survey.
- Tom Warren would like the commissioners to consider the purchase of the Modroo property and asked how much time is needed? The commissioners responded and Joe Leslie acknowledged that the time was "...within a couple of days".
- Al Klause didn't feel that the two commissioners were representative of the people in the audience.
- Sharmyn Clark reported on the survey and mentioned 91% felt the Park Commission should allow the land purchase paid for by the tax levy.
- Shelley Chernin was in favor of the land acquisition and rents a home verses others that own their home.
- David Genske Jr felt that more funds were needed for the maintenance. His Great Grandfather built the Modroo house.

- Lowell Wolfe was not against the purchase but questioned if restrictions from the land conservancy had extra expenses to consider. He also mentioned the need to keep things in perspective with the budget and the project needed to work with the zoning commission long term to balance the economic development of the woodlands.
- Ed Wells mentioned the concern of a large development and was worried to lose the money. Charlie Butters addressed his concern and stated that the county budget commission can stop the collection of levy monies going forward but no one can claw back or seize any money already collected from any levy, that would be illegal per the county auditor's office.
- Tony Fester mentioned that if the property is developed it will need to be maintained; undeveloped nothing need be done. He does not want high density housing and stated the increased costs that will impact the police, fire and road expenditures for the township.
- Janet Hargrave asked how the property was zoned? Charlie Butters responded that it is R-3.
- Kurt Gabram asked if we could divert funds from the general fund and asked the commissioners to stick with the plan.
- Eileen Fisco asked the board to use a visionary approach. Grow and secure property values and let nature do its thing.
- Carol Kwan said Russell is a great place to live and would like to keep it like it is. She loves the parks.
- Laura Leopold asked a question and Joe Leslie spoke on behalf of the land conservancy. He stated easements are up to the commissioners and that there is a strict time table to complete this acquisition. The planned allowance for development was 17+ homes. Roy Podojil thanked Joe Leslie for the work he has done.

Conversation between the board and Joe Leslie expounded that the commission would buy 49 acres for 1.4 million and the land conservancy would purchase 3 acres for ~\$200,000. Charlie Butters mentioned the amount per acre seems high. Roy Podojil mentioned the meadow was pristine with flat lands.

- Rob Morgan said that cultural heritage is important and you can't underestimate the value of open space.
- Mark Davis felt the property was a good deal and said there are no comps on the Modroo farm. There are two choices – to preserve the property as a gateway to Chagrin Falls or develop it.
- Paul Fantelli trusted the previous park board.

Linda O'Brien talked with Joe Leslie and agreed to meet with Mary Modroo to see if the agreement could be extended.

The meeting was closed at 8:42 p.m.

Commissioner

Commissioner