

MINUTES

SEPTEMBER 17, 2003

The Board of Chosen Freeholders of the County of Warren met in work session in its offices in the Administration Building, Belvidere, New Jersey on September 17, 2003, at 7:38 p.m.

The meeting was called to order by Freeholder Director Doherty and upon roll call the following members were present: Freeholder Michael J. Doherty, Freeholder Richard Gardner and Freeholder John DiMaio. Also attending were County Counsel Joseph J. Bell and Deputy Clerk Tammy M. Lynn.

The Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag was led by Director Doherty.

Director Doherty read the following statement: **“ADEQUATE NOTICE OF THIS MEETING OF SEPTEMBER 17, 2003 WAS GIVEN IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT BY FORWARDING A SCHEDULE OF REGULAR MEETINGS OF THE BOARD OF CHOSEN FREEHOLDERS TO THE WARREN COUNTY CLERK, THE STAR/GAZETTE, THE EXPRESS-TIMES, STAR-LEDGER, AND BY POSTING A COPY THEREOF ON THE BULLETIN BOARD IN THE OFFICE OF THE BOARD OF CHOSEN FREEHOLDERS. FORMAL ACTION MAY BE TAKEN BY THE BOARD OF CHOSEN FREEHOLDERS AT THIS MEETING. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IS ENCOURAGED. IN ORDER TO ASSURE FULL PUBLIC PARTICIPATION, THOSE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES WHO WISH TO ATTEND THE MEETING SHOULD SUBMIT ANY REQUESTS FOR SPECIAL ACCOMMODATION ONE WEEK IN ADVANCE”.**

Director Doherty asked Planning Director Dave Dech to begin the White Lake Management Plan presentation. Mr. Dech thanked the Board for allowing this presentation and he introduced the presenters; Jane Bullis member of the Warren County Board of Recreation, Donna Drewes of the NRCS, Michael VanClef of The Nature Conservancy, Greg Sipple, Sr. Planner in the WC Planning Department and Tim Dunne of the NRCS.

Ms. Bullis explained that the Board of Recreation recommended six years ago to begin this study when they found this lake had many species of global importance. She stated that the study was funded solely with grant funds and countless hours of volunteer work. Ms. Bullis stated that White Lake is actually supplied water below the ground like a sinkhole.

Mike VanClef told the Board that he inspected the site and found a need to protect the Bio-diversities. He began to present his findings on the slide show of 86 species of wetland plant communities, 83 species of butterfly communities, 79 documented species of diverse bird communities, 18 species of amphibian communities all with state, regional, and national or global conservation concerns.

Greg Sipple presented the historical and cultural sites that have been discovered which included an Icehouse, marl works, South Mountain and Boston Railroad, Limekiln and areas which have artifacts confirming Native American Indian activities from the Archaic period.

Donna Drewes concluded thanking the Board and offered to answer any questions.

Mr. Doherty thanked the committee for the informative presentation and planning team for their dedication and time to keep the rural character of the county.

Mr. Gardner thanked Mrs. Drewes for the invitation to tour the site and stated that one item not mentioned was a trail area. Mrs. Drewes responded that the Ridge and Valley Conservancy had presented a trail design, which will allow public access without disturbing the species. Mr.

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Sipple informed the Board that the plan is eventually to get the trail connected to the Water Gap and the Appalachian Trail. Mr. Gardner also thanked Mr. Sipple for offering to show him the trail area.

Mr. Gardner told the Board that he believes a serious examination needs to be given to the White Lake Management Plan to continue a balanced plan of this natural tourist attraction and its maintenance.

Mr. Dunne stated that the committee has had many discussions relating to continuing this natural resource, more importantly the recommendation would be to have one person assigned to coordinate the volunteers so that the plan can continue for at least five (5) years. The study has proven that there are invasive plants that need attention now or at least within the next year. He mentioned that this person could also investigate additional grant funding to cover the plans for having a dock installed for fishing recreation.

Mr. DiMaio responded that he is curious about the plans presented and asked if the committee has looked into a partnership. Mrs. Drewes explained that the partnership has begun however, they still need a Land Steward and they are asking that the Board consider appropriating \$20,000 of the Open Space Trust Fund towards a part-time maintenance person. Mr. Sipple explained the partnership is with the New Jersey Fish and Wildlife, they provide State Police patrolling against public violators and they provide land maintenance of the grounds.

Ms. Bullis shared that there were many individuals who were the brains of the committee and it is their hope that the Board would buy into their dedicated volunteerism and efforts to keep this in Warren County.

Mr. Doherty thanked the committee for their presentation.

Director Doherty called for a break at 8:30 p.m.

Director Doherty returned the meeting to open session at 8:35 p.m.

Director Doherty invited Karen Blumenfeld, Esq. to present a five (5) minute description of the New Jersey Laws on tobacco control.

Ms. Blumenfeld recognized in attendance the following county representatives, Donna Rue as the County Health Educator, Vito Weinberger, youth coordinator of REBEL, Tara McGloughlin, Administrator of the Warren County GASP (Group Against Smoking Pollution), and noted that although John Hawk, Director of the Warren County Environmental Health Department isn't here because he was called to active duty in Iraq, he played a very important role in combating the smoke pollution county wide. Ms. Blumenfeld asked that it would be most helpful if the Board would communicate and encourage local municipalities to increase smoke free areas in parks for children to have a safe environment.

Ms. Blumenfeld distributed a report of the adopted resolutions that have controlled tobacco use in many municipalities throughout Warren County. She further asked that the Board consider a proclamation or resolution for a smoke free day or week-end a month.

One of the REBEL students, Chris, told the Freeholders that his group had an event in Washington Boro where they picked up cigarette butts in a community park and were shocked that they collected 1,500 of them that day.

Mr. Gardner thanked the presenters for their suggestions and agrees that smoking bans

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have increased tremendously; he shared his experience that while attending High School there used to be a designated area for students to smoke and that is no more. As far as passing a proclamation or resolution to stop smoking any time during any given month would be inappropriate for the local economy and business owners. He applauded the GASP groups' efforts regarding community awareness and initiatives to involve county youth.

Mr. Doherty thanked Ms. Blumenfeld for her presentation tonight and information that confirms our future leaders are learning a better recipe for a happy life which could be smoke free some day.

Donna Rue stated that Ms. Blumenfeld will be holding a smoke free training session for anyone who would like to learn how to develop policies and resolutions on Thursday, October 2nd at the Asbury Willows Restaurant, and she invited everyone to attend.

Director Doherty asked Director of Land Preservation Robert Resker to begin his annual report presentation at 8:45 p.m.

Mr. Resker reported that this department was established just over a year ago, and charged with overseeing the many functions available since Open Space Tax revenues and programs were established by the voters and are administered by the Board of Recreation Commissioners, the Warren County Agriculture Development Board, Municipal and Charitable Conservancy Trust Fund Committee. The department began with two employees, and they have been so busy that another was added to continue the timely processing of the land inventory acquired and for future acquisitions.

Mr. Resker explained that a map has been established of all the land acquisitions by block and lot, and a procedure handbook was developed for all the necessary functions needed to acquire the land.

Mr. Resker stated within the next month Warren County will have approximately 11,000 acres of farmland preserved. He also explained that next year there are more encouraging initiatives for municipal farmland preservation and the ability to establish an Agriculture Development Area once it is certified by the State Agriculture Development Commission.

Mr. Resker asked the Board to review the list of Open Space land projects shown in the annual report since it began in 1986. He also mentioned that the Municipal and Charitable Conservancy Trust Fund Committee has reviewed over 102 project applications and awarded 24 projects that met the requirements and were covered by revenues received within the 25% allowance of the Open Space Trust Fund.

Mr. Resker reported that the Land Preservation Department is also responsible for overall maintenance of all the passive open space areas that have been acquired by the county. There are a few properties not requiring direct county maintenance such as previous agreements made with the Friends of New Jersey Railroad and Transportation, The Lee family has "life rights", the White Lake project which was previously reported on tonight, Morris Canal Committee volunteers their time on maintaining certain sites, and the Bread Lock Park is maintained by the Highlands Project. He concluded his report explaining the financial overview of funds spent, available for acquisitions pending, operating expenses, and funds anticipated to be reimbursed by state programs.

Mr. Doherty stated that the Board is very confident in what has been completed. He said that when the concept of creating this Department began, he recalled that the person he thought best to head the Department was Mr. Resker because of all the experience he has in this area.

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Mr. Resker responded that he would not have been able to accomplish all that he has without the assistance of his staff.

Mr. Gardner echoed the sentiments of Mr. Doherty and wanted to acknowledge the milestone of having more than 10,000 acres of open space lands in the county. That confirms the voters made an excellent decision to not only preserve land, but to improve the Agri-business initiatives.

Mr. DiMaio stated that this report confirms everything he had hoped for Warren County. He recognized how important it was to have all the open space programs brought under one department to enable maximum purchasing, dedicating certain staff with the important tasks necessary to accomplish the preservation of land throughout the county.

There were no public comments on agenda items.

RESOLUTION 549-03

On motion by Mr. Gardner, seconded by Mr. DiMaio, the following resolution was adopted by the Board of Chosen Freeholders of the County of Warren at a meeting held on September 17, 2003.

RESOLUTION TO PAY BILLS FOR MASTER VOUCHER NUMBER 2003 - 37.

Be and it is hereby resolved that Master Voucher Certificate **For Certification/Ratification for Payment No. 2003-37** dated **September 17, 2003** in the amount of **\$ 1,156,416.33** including bills and investments, is approved subject to the review of the vouchers
By the Board of Chosen Freeholders.

2003-37**1,156,416.33**

I hereby certify the above to be a true copy of a resolution adopted by the Board of Chosen Freeholders of the County of Warren on the date above mentioned.

Tammy M. Lynn Deputy Clerk

ROLL CALL: Mr. DiMaio yes, Mr. Gardner yes, Mr. Doherty yes.

Deputy Clerk Tammy M. Lynn asked the Board to approve the request submitted by the Belvidere Recreation Coordinator Noelle Kornegay to use the Garrett D. Wall Park for a Harvest Festival on Sunday, October 19, 2003 with a rain date of October 26, 2003 at 1:00 p.m. The Board approved and asked that a written confirmation be sent to Ms. Kornegay.

Under Freeholder comments, Mr. Gardner stated that he sees White Lake being very important to Warren County. He asked that the Board take a serious look at the unique opportunity this area offers for Warren County. He also wanted to recognize the expert volunteers that have dedicated the past six years to gathering the necessary information they reported on this evening.

Mr. DiMaio stated that he has nothing to report at this time.

Mr. Doherty stated that last weeks discussion relating to facility requirements was because of the intense lobbying that has occurred over the last three years by those represented by the Library Commission, the Courts and the County Facility committee. He asked Mr. DiMaio what he is planning because he doesn't want to see increased taxes and said he is not for any facility expansions.

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Mr. DiMaio responded that he has not made a decision either way. He believes that a tour of all the county facilities is needed, not only to determine if an expansion is necessary, but also to make sure the current facilities are properly maintained and up to all code requirements.

Mr. Doherty stated that the needs of the people is his only concern and they have told him they cannot afford another tax increase. He asked Mr. DiMaio for the status of any referendum that may be presented to the voters for approval.

Mr. DiMaio responded asking Mr. Doherty to direct his energies towards presenting a bill in the Assembly to have the State take fiscal responsibilities for all the mandates directed back to the county.

Mr. Bell stated that there is not enough time to present a referendum to the voters as it requires filing 72 days prior to a November General Election.

Under closing public comments, Bob Shandor of Lopatcong Township told the Board that he is a concerned citizen and is unhappy with the current condition of the Courthouse building facade and peeling paint on the exterior.

Mr. Shandor then asked the Board what the procedure was to submit a budget request on behalf of the Warren County Board of Recreation Commissioners. He explained that attempts have failed the past couple of years when he presented his request to the Land Preservation Director and the Planning Director. Mr. Shandor stated that the Board of Recreation Commissioners would like to request approximately \$4,000 to replace a barn roof and move some trees on the Jim Lee property.

Mr. Doherty suggested to Mr. Shandor to submit his request in writing to Deputy Clerk Tammy M. Lynn or County Administrator Steve Marvin for budget review and consideration.

Mr. Gardner asked Mr. Shandor to explain what barn needed a new roof. Mr. Shandor explained it is the barn situated on the Bread Lock Park site.

Mr. Shandor told the Board that he had one more comment. He informed the Board that the 2003 Warren County Directory states that the Courthouse message states duties and service and asked if they are the guidelines to make appropriate decisions.

Mr. Bell responded the Board of Chosen Freeholders inherently decides the best duties, responsibilities and services for this county. Mr. Shandor responded that he just heard that there was not enough parking at the Warren County Community College, causing some students to park on the lawn. Mr. Doherty responded that he spoke with a Community College Trustee this week and was informed that College President DeSanctis knew of this situation and never informed the Trustees so that appropriate measures could be taken.

Scott McDonald, Washington Boro resident asked the Board to provide the status of the Senior Nutrition site issues recently reported in the paper. Mr. Doherty responded that Human Services Director Karen Kubert provided a detailed report of the ongoing improvements that Executive Director Susan Lennon has accomplished to date, and a meeting is scheduled this month with Nutrition Site Managers and the contractor. He explained that regrettably, he and Mr. Gardner were not able to visit one of the nutrition sites but plan to very shortly, and told Mr. McDonald that Mr. DiMaio reported his visit at the last Freeholder meeting.

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Mr. McDonald asked Mr. DiMaio to describe his experience and what site was visited. Mr. DiMaio responded that he went to the Hackettstown Nutrition site, the food was hot but bland which is necessary for each participants well being. He explained that some of the participants discussed vegetable choice preferences and yes some do not like the lasagna at times. Mr. DiMaio was told that shortages only occur when participants do not register; by and large this program is great for the senior population throughout the county because it not only provides a balanced meal but it offers socialization opportunities that they would not have had.

Mr. McDonald asked if the next site manager meeting would be open for the public to attend. Mr. Doherty told Mr. McDonald to provide his contact information to Deputy Clerk Tammy M. Lynn and she will advise him as soon as she can.

Mr. McDonald thanked Mr. Doherty for the opportunity.

There were no press comments or questions.

On motion by Mr. Gardner, seconded by Mr. DiMaio, and there being no further action anticipated the meeting was adjourned at 9:32 p.m.

ROLL CALL: Mr. DiMaio yes, Mr. Gardner yes, Mr. Doherty yes.

ATTESTED TO:

Tammy M. Lynn, Deputy Clerk