

Borough of Califon Planning/Zoning Board
MINUTES
MAY 18, 2022
7:30 PM

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT THE PLANNING AND ZONING BOARD OF THE BOROUGH OF CALIFON, COUNTY OF HUNTERDON, STATE OF NEW JERSEY WILL HOLD A REGULARLY SCHEDULED PUBLIC MEETING ON WEDNESDAY, MAY 18, 2022 AT 7:30 PM. THE FOLLOWING IS AN AGENDA FOR SAID MEETING AND FORMAL ACTION MAY OR MAY NOT BE TAKEN ON A PORTION OF THIS AGENDA. THE PUBLIC IS INVITED AND MAY ATTEND SAID MEETING SUBJECT TO THOSE AREAS OF CONSIDERATION DESIGNATED, IF ANY, FROM WHICH THE PUBLIC MAY BE EXCLUDED PURSUANT TO SECTION 7B & 8 OF THE LAWS OF 1975.

I. Arthur Owens called the meeting to order and read the Open Public Meeting Statement

This is a regularly scheduled meeting of the Borough of Califon Combined Land Use Board. Adequate notice of this meeting has been given in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act as follows: Notice was sent to and published in the Hunterdon County Democrat and the Hunterdon Review and the notice of this meeting was posted on the bulletin board in the Borough Municipal Building and filed with the Borough Clerk.

II. Arthur Owens led all present in the Pledge of Allegiance

III. Roll Call

Mayor Daniel: absent	Leo Janas: absent
Thomas Bedell: absent	Arthur Owens: present
Jason Ruggiero: present	Jason Bittay: present
John Lynch: present	

IV. Approval of Minutes: Tabled until next meeting.

V. Open Space and Recreation Plan Round Table Discussion

Jim Kyle explained that the Borough had been given funding by the Highlands Council to prepare an Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP). The Board is in the beginning stages where we identify goals and objectives, and a general vision for the OSRP. Another critical part that is required by the Green Acres Program requirement is that we identify land the Borough wants to target for acquisition for open space. The plan will talk about many things; active recreation, passive recreation and conservation. The focus is that in order to utilize state and county cost sharing we need to adopt an OSRP.

Jim Kyle presented a large map that shows existing open space, trails, streams, etc. The hope for the evening was to look at the map and figure out where the Borough wants to focus their efforts. Jim Kyle also provided a draft list of goals and objectives for the Open Space and Recreation

Plan. The map also showed Land Use by Property Class which shows where publicly owned and vacant properties are.

Board Members and Residents present had an informal discussion on the various needs some points made are listed below.

Jim Kyle pointed out that most farm qualified properties are woodlands management, not true agriculture.

The map shows what vacant properties may be out there.

The Borough can only put municipal owned properties on the ROSI

Most land that we may be able to acquire would not be suitable for active recreation.

Jim Kyle stated that one idea is to be able to provide access to the river.

Jason Ruggiero suggested that some of the vacant properties across from River Road owned along the river may be possibilities.

John Lynch pointed out that the park has a large access to the river.

A resident stated that other access to other parts of the river may be beneficial, especially because the access from the park did not provide the best fishing.

Karen Mastro provided an update that the Environmental commission is looking at a recommendation to the council to begin discussions with the county regarding the property around the park.

Jim Kyle asked, are there potential points to connect the Columbia trail to the river? is there a need for bathrooms at the park? Etc.?

Karen Mastro brought to the Boards attention that there have been issues with porta johns being vandalized. It is also difficult putting garbage cans around because there is no one to service them. At this point it needs to be carry in and carry out. The difficulty is that Califon does not have its own DPW to service their parks. Califon has a contract for specific services with Tewksbury. Arthur Owens asked if a garbage company would service the area with large cans. Karen Mastro stated that unfortunately because of the location it has been difficult.

A recommendation was made to possibly have some sort of security camera in the park. The Borough may be able to get a grant for this.

The question was raised if the open space tax could be utilized to build a more permanent restroom facility. Jim Kyle pointed out that it is important how referendum was worded. It dictates how open space tax can be used.

Leo Janas asked if there was a way to assess what is needed regarding active recreation.

Jim Kyle said there is a formula that can help assess. The problem will be finding additional ground that would be suitable for playing fields.

Jason Ruggiero stated that his wife had the idea to place more seating around the park. Benches around playground possibly.

Jim Kyle stated possibly naturalizing areas around the park. Possibly a stream corridor restoration plan. He mentioned that possibly a conservation group would volunteer to run this type of project.

A Pollinator garden possibly down by the playground.

A member of the environmental commission applied for a grant.

Art Owens said the peninsula area may be a good area depending on how wet it is.

Jim Kyle stated that most of county land seems to be between the two forks in the river.

In summary some of the items mentioned were:

- River access
- Restrooms
- Benches,
- Meadows,
- Pond
- Fire pit
- Pollination station

The Board Members and Residents present gathered around the map and discussed various locations.

Parcels at end of river road makes good sense for conservation land

Wooded, by river, makes sense as a possibility.

Eastern end of borough and along river may be an attainable goal, Mill pond.

Discussion occurred regarding possibly purchasing the Mill pond if possible.

Board can identify as many parcels as they want

Best practice to have parcels of interest on the plan.

John Lynch asked if there was any way to incorporate this into the Cole mill dam issue. To make Califon more of a stake holder.

We will place the map and draft on website and social media. Plan requirements can also be placed on website as a separate document.

Jim Kyle will begin working on this he will map out the priority properties

At June meeting there will be a discussion on the acquisition properties that were discussed. See what comments the public has. This will be our public component. Jim Kyle will then put together a draft. Review in June and then hold a public hearing. We can post the draft on the website to review.

VI. Public Comment: none

VII. Comments from Board Members on non-agenda items: none

VIII. Adjournment: Motion to adjourn: Jason Ruggiero

Second: John Lynch

Meeting adjourned at 9:01 pm

Prepared by Catherine Innella

Approved September 21, 2022