FIVE YEAR VISION

FOR

MOSLE PRESERVE

LOT 17.02, BLOCK 100
TOWNSHIP OF MENDHAM
MORRIS COUNTY, NEW JERSEY

Prepared by:
The Mendham Township Recreation Committee

February 2014

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I. Introduction

The purpose of this report is to identify the existing and proposed uses and improvements at the Mosle Preserve Facility, analyze the issues and/or challenges associated with the improvements, and prepare a list of recommendations to resolve any issues or challenges. A five year time frame has been chosen for implementation of the recommendations.

II. Description of Facility

The Mosle Preserve is a recreation area located in the southwesterly portion of Mendham Township. The facility provides active and passive recreation areas for the residents of Mendham Township. Access to the facility is via a paved driveway extending from the intersection of Hunters Glen Road and Carriage Hill Drive. The tract consists of approximately 113 acres and is jointly owned by the Schiff Natural Lands Trust, Inc., The New Jersey Water Supply Authority, and the Township of Mendham. The property was purchase from The Roman Catholic Sisters of St. John the Baptist in 2008.

The active recreation areas consist of two (2) soccer fields and practice area, and one (1) baseball field. The fields are game quality and in reasonably good shape overall. The passive recreation areas consist of hiking, hunting and horseback riding in the woodlands, open field areas and trail network. The property contains some steeply sloping lands, a pocket of freshwater wetlands, and the headwaters of the Gladstone Brook (North Branch of the Raritan River), a Category One Stream as classified by the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP). Conservation easements deed restrict the property to a large extent. A single gravel parking area serves the facility.

III. Inventory of Existing Recreation Areas and Uses

1. Soccer Fields- There are two (2) regulation size soccer fields with a small practice area to one side. Both fields are constructed of natural turf. These fields do not have formalized spectator areas, however, there is a mowed slope on the western side of the facility where spectators can sit and view the fields. There are also ample areas around the fields for spectators to stand or place portable seating. These fields are used primarily in the spring and fall. In the spring, the fields have typically been first offered to the West Morris Soccer Club (WMSC). Once the WMSC schedule of use has been determined, the fields are then offered to the Stronghold Soccer Club (SSC). In the past two springs, WMSC has declined use of the fields, so SSC has been the primary user. In the spring, the fields are utilized for practice on weekday evenings from 5:30 pm to 8:30 pm. Games are played on Sundays throughout the entire day.

In the fall, SSC traditionally shares the weeknight use of the fields with the WMSC. Typically, SSC uses the fields three weekday evenings, and WMSC uses the fields on two weekday evenings. The use for both clubs is generally from 5:30 pm until dusk. On Sundays in the fall, the fields have been used for games only by SSC. Although the fields have been offered to WMSC, they have declined usage in recent years.

2. Baseball Field- The baseball diamond is a fully fenced, regulation size Little League Field. The field was designed and built by Mendham Little League and it is located just south of the soccer fields. The field currently consists of a clay infield and natural turf outfield. It has fenced dugout areas and bleachers are available for spectators. It is used in the spring for both practice and games, and occasionally during the summer for practice only. Weeknight practice sessions are generally from 6:00 pm to 6:30 pm. Games and practices are played on Saturdays and Sundays generally from 9 am to 3:30 pm, and 4:30 pm to 5:00 pm.

3. Hiking and Cross Country Trails- Hiking is permitted throughout the property, but hikers are encouraged to use the formal trails located throughout the property (see Appendix A). Currently, there are three loops on the property (Chapel Loop, Magic Loop, and Old Pasture Connector). An additional trail loop is planned (Sisters Loop), but has not yet been developed. The trails system winds through the property and traverses gently sloping terrain. Each trail can be accessed from the parking area and is marked with blazes throughout its length. The trails are used by the public for general walking and hiking, and for practice by the Mendham Magic Cross Country (MMCC) Team. MMCC practice typically begins in late august on Wednesday nights only and continues through the end of October.

4. Hunting- Hunting is permitted throughout the wooded portion of the property by tree stand only. The Mendham Township Wildlife Management Committee is responsible for scheduling hunters with valid permits to use the property. Currently, hunting for deer and coyote by shotgun is permitted from tree stands only from December 9-14, 2013, and from December 28, 2013 to January 16, 2014. The property is closed to the public during those dates. Bow hunting for deer is currently permitted from tree stands only from September 14, 2013, through January 25, 2014.

5. Horseback Riding- Horseback Riding is permitted throughout the property but is encouraged to use the formal trail system. Horseback Riding is permitted year round except for hunting season.

IV. Inventory of Existing Structures and Improvements

1. Chapel – This structure is located adjacent to the existing gravel parking area in the northerly portion of the property. The chapel is constructed of masonry block (16 feet by 22 feet) and has a concrete slab floor. The roof is constructed of asphalt shingles and has a wood cupola. No utility connections serve this structure. It is in generally poor condition and in need of repair. It was once used in connection with the St. John's cemetery. This structure has limited use due to its size, materials, condition and location.

2. Access Drives/Gravel Parking Lot- A paved driveway provides primary access to the property. The driveway terminates at a gravel parking area. This parking area has two-way circulation is not striped to provide individual parking stalls. Approximately sixty (60) vehicles (maximum) can park in the parking area. Access to the southern portion of the property is available via a gravel driveway. This driveway terminates at a paved area adjacent to the baseball field.

3. Storage/Workshop Building – This structure is located adjacent to the playing fields. Originally, the building was a gymnasium with a kitchen to the rear, and appears to be in fair to poor condition. It is constructed of masonry block and currently contains the maintenance equipment and materials for the property.

4. Stormwater Management and Drainage - Runoff from the driveway and parking area improvements are collected and managed by infiltration basins. Two infiltration basins are located at the intersection with Carriage Hill Drive and one is located just east of the parking area. The basins are open basins and each contain an outlet structure.

5. Storage Shed- A small, pre-fabricated shed is located adjacent to the backstop that serves the baseball field. The shed is in excellent condition.

6. Batting Cage- A soft net batting cage exists south of the ballfield on the other side of the paved driveway. The structure appears to be in good condition.

7. Basketball nets- There are two basketball nets located in the southern portion of the facility adjacent to the paved areas (which provide the courts). These basketball courts are not formalized and the backboard, hoops and nets are in very poor condition.

V. Assessment of Issues/Challenges

1. Field Use- There are multiple groups who annually express interest in utilizing the ball-fields. The use of the fields should be reviewed to ensure that they receive appropriate consideration by all users. Schedules should be reviewed with maintenance history to determine appropriate rest periods for turf sustainability.

2. Emergency Access- There is currently one primary access to the property from the entrance off Carriage Hill Drive. A secondary access is available in the event of emergency through the Sisters Property on the Mosle Road side of the facility. Access for emergency vehicles should be an element of any future plans to improve the parking and access drive to the fields.

3. Parking and Circulation- The parking area is a gravel area without striped stalls. Approximate stall locations are identified by concrete wheel stops. During peak field use, parking is limited and maneuvering and unloading of vehicles can be difficult for users. An alternative parking layout, parking surface and/or expansion should be investigated to determine the maximum number of stalls that can be reasonably constructed in the parking area. The approximate engineering and construction costs of any improvements should be compared to potential funding sources.

4. Chapel- The Department of Public Works has reviewed the structure and determined that the repair and maintenance costs required to bring the structure back to safe, usable condition will be excessive. The location and materials of construction gives it extremely limited opportunities for re-use.

5. Access to baseball field and southern portion of the property- A gravel access drive of approximately 15 feet in width extends from the main parking area to the paved area adjacent to the ball field. The type and frequency of use of this access should be reviewed to determine if it meets the needs as currently improved.

6. Coaches Parking and Storage- The use of the adjacent paved areas by coaches should be reviewed. Consideration should be given to reserved parking for coaches in close proximity to fields and storage areas. Storage needs for all users should be reviewed to determine if additional areas or locations should be provided.

7. Americans with Disabilities- Currently, the facility does not have formal parking stalls reserved for ADA use. Parking for ADA appears to be typically located in the southern area of the facility in the area of the existing pavement. Focus should be placed on installation of the reserved parking stalls in accordance with the previously approved ordinance.

8. Solid Waste Disposal and Recycling- Currently, there are four plastic trash cans located on the facility. Two are located at the southern end of the parking area,

one is located between the soccer fields, and one is located near the portable toilet. It does not appear that there are separate containers available for recyclables. The size, material, and locations of these containers should be reviewed.

9. Restrooms- Currently, there is one portable toilet on the property. The portable toilet is located at the southern end of the fields adjacent to the paved area. This facility is not ADA accessible. The need for a permanent, ADA accessible comfort station should be investigated. The approximate engineering and construction costs of any improvements should be compared to the potential funding sources.

10. Basketball nets- The need for these structures should be reviewed. If it is determined that they are worth retaining, they should be maintained so that they are in working order. If it is determined that they are not worthy of retaining, then they should be removed.

11. Security Lighting- Currently, the only permanent site lighting on site consists of two building mounted flood lights located on the eastern side of the Storage/Workshop building. The existing and anticipated field schedule should be reviewed in connection with daylight hours to determine if any additional lighting is appropriate for safety. Per the information provided, it appears there is a desire by some users for temporary or permanent field lighting. However, for the purposes of this plan, we assume that this is outside the scope of this report.

12. Access and Available Seating- Available seating for all spectators should be reviewed to ensure that all users can be accommodated. Walkways, staircases and/or ramps to serve these areas should be given consideration.

13. Pets- The policy for pets and location of pet waste disposal should be reviewed. Stations for pet waste disposal bags may be appropriate.

14. Storage/Workshop Building- The current use and future of this large structure should be determined. Although the structure may provide an area for storage for maintenance equipment and materials, the structure appears to be in disrepair and is not a positive aesthetic feature for the property. All costs associated with the demolition of this structure should be identified.

15. Maintenance- At the current time all maintenance is performed by Keith Hill of the Stronghold Soccer Club. This maintenance consists of all labor and materials associated with all three recreation fields. The current maintenance agreements, budget and caretaker responsibilities for the facility should be reviewed to ensure that they are adequate and appropriate given the intensity of use for each of the

recreation components. Snow plowing is not currently performed by any party for the driveways or parking areas.

16. Shelter Areas- Currently, there are few areas that users or spectators can get relief from the sun or inclement weather. Consideration should be given to one or more areas where a structure of appropriate size and materials can be constructed for this purpose. The approximate engineering and construction costs of any improvements should be compared to potential funding sources.

17. Hiking/Cross Country Trails- Currently, the trails are maintained through a combined effort of the Department of Public Works and volunteers. The current program should be reviewed to ensure that it is adequate.

VI. Recommendations

1. Field Use-The Recreation Commission in conjunction with the Recreation Director should review the field users and schedule in early 2014. Requests by additional groups for field time should be considered provided that proper rest of the fields can be accomplished. The schedules should provide adequate time between user groups so that overlap parking and/or pick up are minimized.

2. Emergency Access- Township Emergency Services should be consulted in early 2014 to review the conceptual parking expansion design. As any other plans for improvements are developed, the designer shall meet with Township Emergency Services to ensure that any improvements are designed to address emergency services needs.

3. Parking and Circulation- The parking area circulation pattern presently in place is limited and should be revised to be a one-way circulation to avoid vehicle conflicts. Improvements to the existing parking area should be performed to allow for additional vehicles during peak periods of use. The size of stalls and back up areas should allow for safe vehicle maneuvering and sports equipment loading and unloading from vehicles. A conceptual parking design has been prepared and is presented in Appendix A. A full design should be performed so that construction can be budgeted for the spring or summer of 2014. After construction of the expansion as represented in Appendix A, vehicle use should be monitored. If, after monitoring, additional parking is warranted, then areas adjacent to the storage/workshop building should be considered.

4. Chapel- The Chapel is located in an awkward location that prevents parking lot expansion. The structure should be removed in 2014. The materials or contents should be offered to the prior owner before disposal.

5. Pedestrian access to baseball field and southern portion of the property- This element should be reviewed to determine if past pedestrian movements require

some level of improvement in order to enhance safety for field users and spectators. A conceptual plan should be prepared by 2015 to determine if a stair system, ramp or walkway can be installed to facilitate pedestrian access from the upper area down to the recreation fields.

6. Coaches Parking and Storage- This element should be reviewed in early 2014 and determined if additional parking and storage areas should be designed in the southern area of the facility. If so, then these components should be incorporated into a conceptual plan.

7. Americans with Disabilities- An ordinance has been adopted for striping and signage installation in the southern portion of the facility to address ADA requirements (see Appendix C). This striping and signage should be installed prior to use of the fields in the spring of 2014. Additional consideration should be given to providing at least one reserved stall in the main parking area to allow users with disabilities to access the northern portion of the property. The conceptual parking plan provided in Appendix A depicts a location for the subject parking stall.

8. Solid Waste Disposal and Recycling- The public works and Township Recycling Coordinator should be consulted in 2014 on a plan for the site. The type and location of the container(s) should be provided in an area that will promote use by patrons while blending with the natural environment. Clean Communities Grant Funds are available to be used for this type of project.

9. Restrooms- The need for additional restrooms has been expressed by users of the facility. A concept plan should be developed by 2015 to identify the appropriate location for the subject improvement. Soil testing should then be performed to confirm that suitable soils exist for the installation of a septic system. Lastly, an Infrastructure Improvement Plan should commence for design of this facility by 2019.

10. Basketball nets- The basketball nets do not appear to be worthy of repair or replacement. The structures should be removed and properly disposed of in the spring of 2014.

11. Security Lighting- Upon adoption of the spring 2014 schedules of field use, it should be determined if any additional security lighting is required. Also included for consideration should any changes to maintenance responsibilities, incidents of vandalism, or unauthorized use of the facility . If it is determined that additional security lighting should be installed, then low wattage, downward type lighting should be utilized.

12. Access and Available Seating- It is understood that the need has been expressed by users for additional seating. A conceptual plan should be prepared to show the type and location of additional seating in 2014.

13. Pets- The Township has an existing policy for parks. This policy should be instituted into the subject facility in 2014.

14. Storage/Workshop Building- This structure is in disrepair and therefore, should be reviewed by a structural engineer and/or architect to determine if it can cost effectively be renovated/repaired to continue to provide a functional structure for the facility. An appropriate time frame in order to complete this review would be by the end of 2014. Careful consideration should be given to determine if a single structure can be developed to address equipment and material storage, restrooms and emergency shelter.

15. Maintenance- The current agreements should be reviewed in early 2014 to determine responsibilities for the next five years. Careful consideration should be given to the level of maintenance and the annual resources (costs and time) required to provide suitable conditions for active and passive recreation.

16. Shelter Areas- It is understood that the need has been expressed to provide shelter from the sun, inclement weather, and emergency situations. This should be considered when the Storage/Workshop building is reviewed for adaptive re-use by 2016.

17. Hiking/Cross Country Trail System- Most of the trails have been implemented as planned with the exception of the Sisters Loop. Prior to implementation of the Sisters Loop, a final review of its location with respect to environmentally sensitive features should be conducted. This should be performed in 2014. Further development of the trail network should be conducted through the recreation commission and if necessary, with consultation with the Township Committee in the next five years.

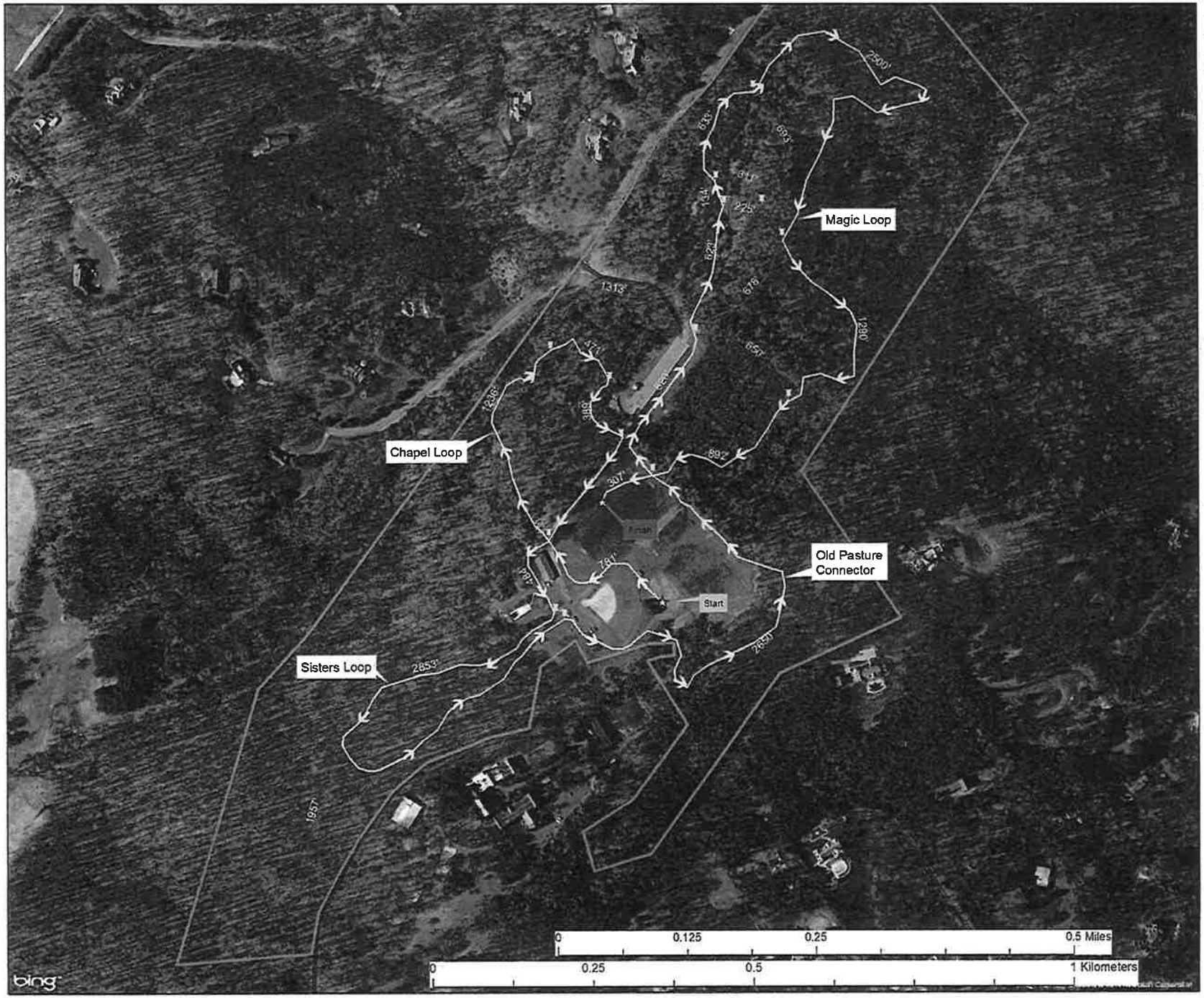
VII. Summary and Conclusions

The Mosle Preserve facility has been open to the public since 2009. Although the facility has provided adequate and necessary active and passive recreation components to the residents of the Township and surrounding community, some improvements are recommended to enhance the facility. The recommendations are general in scope and subject to adequate funding. Prior to the authorization of any improvements, full engineering plans and specifications should be prepared.

Appendix A

Trail System

Mosle Preserve and Recreation Area - Cross Country Trails



5K Course *

Cut-throughs and Other Trails

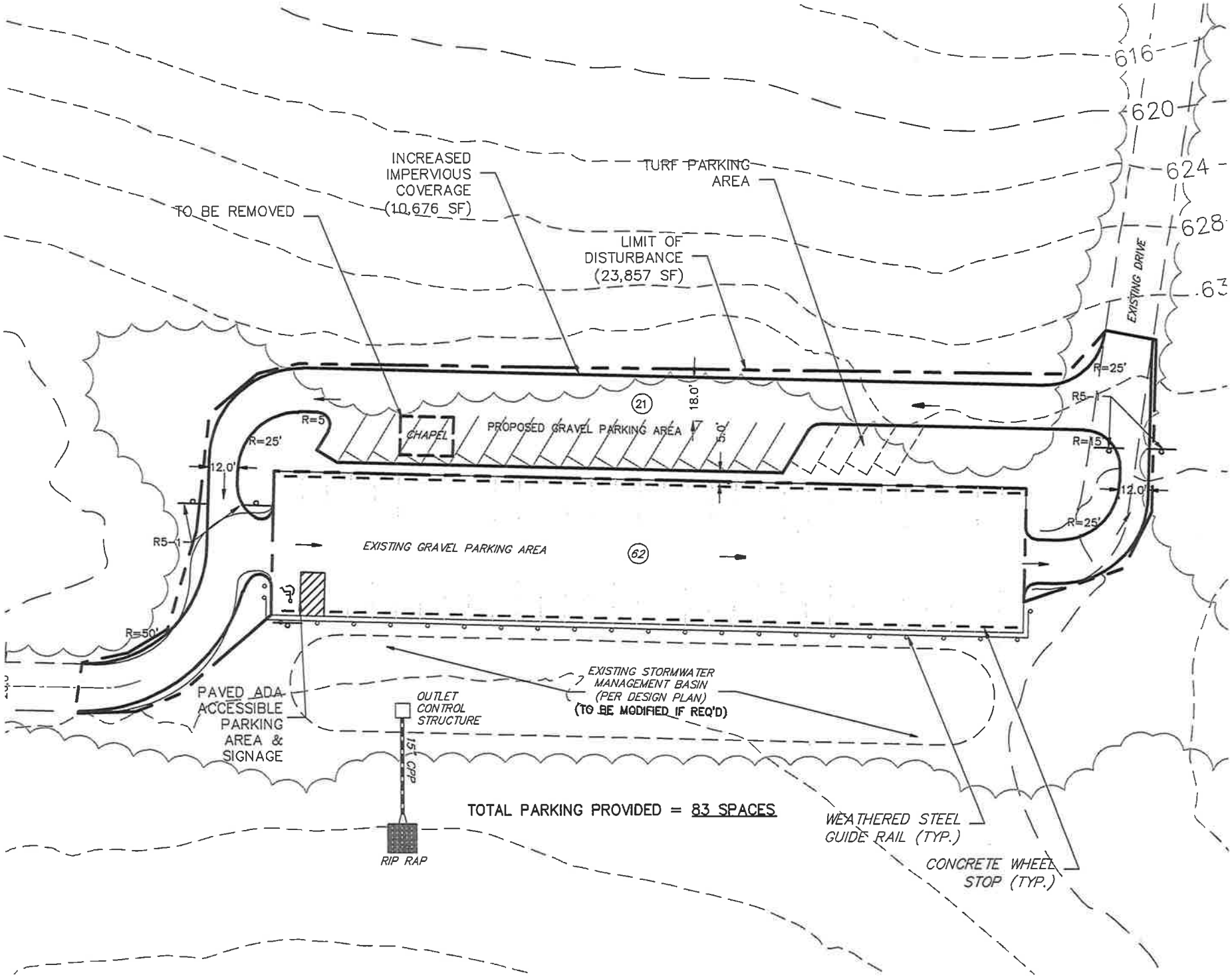
Park Boundary

** 3.1 miles or 5 kilometers*

Date: 1/18/2013

Appendix B

Conceptual Parking Expansion Plan


616
620
624
628
INCREASED IMPERVIOUS COVERAGE (10,676 SF)
TURF PARKING AREA
TO BE REMOVED
LIMIT OF DISTURBANCE (23,857 SF)
EXISTING DRIVE
R=25'
R5
R=15
12.0'
R=25'
21
18.0'
R=5
R=25'
CHAPEL
PROPOSED GRAVEL PARKING AREA
5.0'
12.0'
R5
EXISTING GRAVEL PARKING AREA
62
R=50'
EXISTING STORMWATER MANAGEMENT BASIN (PER DESIGN PLAN)
(TO BE MODIFIED IF REQ'D)
PAVED ADA ACCESSIBLE PARKING AREA & SIGNAGE
OUTLET CONTROL STRUCTURE
15" CPP
RIP RAP
TOTAL PARKING PROVIDED = 83 SPACES
WEATHERED STEEL GUIDE RAIL (TYP.)
CONCRETE WHEEL STOP (TYP.)

Appendix C

Sign Ordinance

TOWNSHIP OF MENDHAM

ORDINANCE XX – 2009

ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE TOWNSHIP OF MENDHAM TO ERECT PARKING, TRAFFIC CONTROL, AND STOP SIGNS ON PROPERTY OWNED BY THE TOWNSHIP DESIGNATED AS LOT 17.02 IN BLOCK 100 ON THE TAX MAP OF THE TOWNSHIP OF MENDHAM FOR PURPOSES OF REGULATION AND ENFORCEMENT OF TRAFFIC AND PARKING

WHEREAS, the Motor Vehicle and Traffic Law, N.J.S.A. 39:4-197 authorizes a municipality to regulate by ordinance the parking, entrance and exit from property owned by the municipality; and

WHEREAS, the Motor Vehicle and Traffic Law, N.J.S.A. 39:4-8, authorizes a municipality to regulate by ordinance the designation of reasonable and safe speed limits upon self-contained streets having no direct connection with any street in another jurisdiction; and

WHEREAS, the authority of the municipality to regulate parking, the exit from property owned by the municipality and to designate reasonable and safe speed limits requires certification by the municipal engineer that the erection of such signs has been approved by him, is in the interest of safety and conforms to the current standards prescribed by the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices for Streets and Highways; and

WHEREAS, the Mendham Township Committee has determined that it is in the best interest of the Township of Mendham (the "Township") for the Township to erect parking signs, stop signs and speed limits signs on Block 17.02, Lot 100, certain real property which is owned by the Township and which does not have a direct connection to a street in any other municipality; and

WHEREAS, the Township Engineer has certified that the erection of signs and placements of markings provided in this Ordinance (1) has been approved by him after investigation of the circumstances, (2) appears to be in the interest of safety and the expedition of traffic on the public property and (3) conforms to the current standards prescribed by the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices for Streets and Highways, as adopted by the Commissioner of Transportation.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED BY THE TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF MENDHAM IN THE COUNTY OF MORRIS AND STATE OF NEW JERSEY, AS FOLLOWS:

1. The Township is hereby authorized to erect signs to regulate parking, traffic movement and speed and to erect stop signs on Block 100, Lot 17.02 in the locations depicted in Mosle Preserve Sign Exhibits A & B, and of the type indicated in Mosle Preserve Sign Exhibits C & D which Exhibits are made a part of this Ordinance.

2. The Township is hereby authorized to enforce the parking, speed, and traffic movement as set forth on the signs indicated in Mosle Preserve Sign Exhibits A through D in the same manner as all other parking and traffic control devices in the Township.

3. This Ordinance shall take effect upon final adoption and publication pursuant to law.

Introduced:

Adopted:

Effective:

ATTEST:

TOWNSHIP OF MENDHAM,
IN THE COUNTY OF MORRIS

By:_____

_____
Ann L. Carlson, RMC
Township Clerk

Frank V. Cioppettini, Jr.
Mayor

References

Mosle Report, prepared by the Mendham Township Facilities Committee, dated September, 2011

Parking Improvements to Mosle Preserve, prepared by Maser Consulting, Mount Arlington, NJ, dated June 5, 2009

www.mendhamtownship.org

www.mendhammagic.com

www.sscsoccer.com