



TOWNSHIP OF HILLSBOROUGH

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News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
June 25, 2103

Open Space Fund Expanded Use Proposal Voters To Decide If Up To 20% Of Future Open Space Tax Revenues Will Be Utilized To Build Recreational Facilities such as Hiking Trails and Ballfields

The Township Committee, Tuesday night, took the first step in expanding the use of the Open Space Fund. Ordinance 2013-17 authorizes the Township Committee to place a question on the ballot for the November General Election for the voters of Hillsborough to decide if a portion of the Open Space Fund can be utilized for improvements of such areas.

In order to present a ballot question to the Somerset County Clerk for inclusion on an upcoming election ballot an ordinance or resolution is needed.

“Over 30% of Hillsborough Township is preserved from development in open space and this ordinance would permit a ballot question to be placed on the upcoming November 5, 2013 General Election, allowing the voters of Hillsborough to weigh in on whether or not the use of funds from the Open Space Fund can be expanded for additional uses,” stated Mayor Frank DelCore during his comments upon introducing the ordinance.

The proposed question read “Shall the Township Committee of the Township of Hillsborough modify and expand the uses and purposes of the Open Space Trust Fund to allow for not more than 20% of the Open Space Trust Fund Tax collected in any one year to be utilized for the development and, or improvement of Park and recreation Facilities that are located on property within the Open Space and Park inventory for recreation, conservation and general open space purposes?”

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Historically, the Hillsborough Open Space Tax, which originated in 1995, provides the funds necessary for the preservation of Township land from development. In 2011, the Township Committee reduced the Open Space Tax from up to four cents (\$0.04) per one hundred dollars (\$100.00) of assessed value to two point eight cents (\$0.028) per one hundred dollars (\$100.00) of assessed value.

“This measure would afford the Hillsborough Taxpayers the opportunity to further enjoy their investment by enhancing the passive and active recreational uses of these preserved lands,” stated Deputy Mayor Doug Tomson, Liaison to the Open Space Advisory Committee.

“This ordinance does not change the amount of the Open Space Tax, but only expands the use of the funds generated from it,” added Mayor Frank DelCore.

If the ordinance is passed next month at a public hearing, the Township Committee will also consider a resolution calling for a study to conduct a thorough analysis of the passive and active recreational needs for Hillsborough Township. The resulting report will provide guidance to prioritizing any improvements.

This ordinance is scheduled for public hearing on July 23, 2013.
