



TOWNSHIP OF HILLSBOROUGH

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News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
August 27, 2103

Interpretative Statement Better Defines Ballot Question

*Hillsborough Voters To Decide If Up To 20% Of Future Open Space
Tax Revenues Can Be Utilized To Create Recreational Uses On Open Space*

In order to clarify any misconceptions regarding the ballot question for the November General Election, Mayor Frank DelCore read the interpretative statement Tuesday evening, the Township Committee adopted Ordinance 2013-17 authorizing the Township Committee to place a question on the November General Election ballot for the voters of Hillsborough to decide if a portion of the Open Space Fund can be utilized for improvements of such areas.

A copy of the adopted ordinance will now be sent to the Somerset County Clerk's Office in preparation of the November ballots.

The proposed question reads "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?"

A yes vote will enable the Township of Hillsborough to appropriate up to 20% of funds collected in 2014 and thereafter from the Open Space Fund for the development and/or improvement of Park and Recreation Facilities on Township-owned property or property that has been purchased with proceeds from the Open Space Fund. A yes vote will not impact the existing balance of the Open Space Fund and will not raise the Township's open space tax. A yes vote does not mandate improvements be made but allows for the appropriation of funds for development or improvements.

Mayor Frank DelCore clarified what the intention of the ballot question. “By amending the usage of the open space fund, beginning in the year 2014, 20% of the Open Space tax collected could be used for open space development and improvements,” stated the Mayor.

A similar step was taken by Somerset County in 2005, when they posed a similar question to voters. When the County proposed a similar question in 2005, they sought up to 25% of the Open Space Fund tax collected to be used of the development and, or improvement of Park and Recreational facilities owned by the County.

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Proposed Expanded Use of Open Space Fund

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“Hillsborough Township has had a very successful record of preserving land within the Township and that will continue, but with over 30% of the Township already preserved, now is that time to invest further into some of those preserved areas so that our residents can utilize those areas and enjoy that investment,” added Mayor DelCore.

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.

“As the Mayor stated, Hillsborough is very successful in preserving land, this measure would allow for funds from the Open Space tax to be used, not for operating expenses, but for new capital improvements to the Open Space inventory for improved facilities,” added Deputy Mayor Doug Tomson, Liaison to the Open Space Advisory Committee.

“This ordinance does not change the amount of the Open Space Tax, nor does it impact the funds previously collected, but only expands the use of a portion of the funds generated from it, beginning in the year 2014,” added Mayor Frank DelCore.
