

My Fellow Township Committee Members and Fellow Residents of Montville Township

I am extremely concerned about an action that may be taken this evening in regards to the purchase of a portion of property known as Block 156, Lot 30, located at 330 Changebridge Road.

This property, across from the old Dell Publishing Building, has been zoned commercial for years. Last year, a developer came forth with a plan for an office building on the site which conforms to all Montville zoning laws. Part of the property is 2+ acres of wetlands that, although can not be built upon, can be used in the determination of the size of the structure.

The proposal went through our planning board and now awaits a final vote. However, some members of the planning board, (Mayor John Rosellini and committeeman Dan Grant), were alarmed at the potential increase in traffic that could be generated from the building.

At first, the developer was told that if he didn't make his building smaller, then the township would delay him in the courts, as long as possible, therefore causing financial hardships.

Having received no support for that idea, Mr. Rosellini tried to rezone the property to residential. Failing at that, Mr. Rosellini, Dan Grant, and Mr. Moscone have come up with the scheme of purchasing the 2+ acres of wetlands, thus forcing the developer to build a smaller structure. The agreed upon price was set at \$525,000.

The scheme passed the township committee by a 3-2 vote. Voting against were Marie Cetrulo and Bob Purnell. The majority, Mr.'s Rosellini, Grant, and Moscone, tried to pass a bond issue for the \$525,000. However, they over-looked the fact that they needed 4 affirmative votes for it's passage. Failing that, now they are attempting to con the citizens of Montville into believing that this 2+ acres of swamp is "open space" and should be bought with Open Space Trust Fund monies.

→ This is an insult to our citizens and an illegal use of our open space tax funds.

Remember, my fellow citizens, that Mr. Rosellini and Mr. Grant were elected by YOU to serve YOU. Both of them have sat on the planning board for many years and one of the jobs of the board is to consider development on Changebridge Road and the effects of increased traffic. Rosellini and Grant have overlooked this property for years and years time and time again!

In this regard, they have blown it and have not served you well !

Now a developer comes along and prepares a building which conforms to all state and township laws and Rosellini and Grant cry "foul". They are more than willing to raid our open space fund and pay this developer \$260,000 an acre for wetlands that are under the guidelines of the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection Agency and can NEVER be built upon anyway!

Apparently, some politicians can't admit to their mistakes but take more tax payers money, your money, to try to cover up their own errors.

Three months ago, at a Township Committee meeting in regards to Morris County purchasing the Pio Costa tract of land that affects our municipal wells, Dan Grant told the concerned citizens that "we have no money in our Open Space Trust Fund account to put towards this project". Suddenly we have found \$525,000 to purchase two garbage acres of wetlands? How many acres of usable woodlands could be purchased with this money?

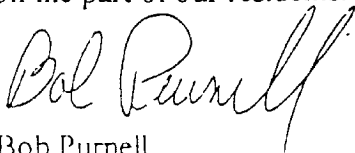
The Montville Township Open Space Trust Fund law (37-2) states: "the funds accumulated within the trust fund may be utilized only for the acquisition of land or development rights in land for active and passive recreation". There is NO active or passive recreation on these two acres of swamp!

This scheme has major consequences in the following areas:

- 1) Legally - There is something wrong when a developer is forced to sell part of his land so he can not build a building that conforms to all laws of the municipality and state.
- 2) Politically - This SMACKS of bad politics. The attempt to sell the idea that this is the best way to use our open space tax dollars is an insult to our citizens intelligence.
- 3) Local Open Space - Do you think that future referendums for increased open space assessments will be approved after this fiasco?
- 4) County Open Space Committee - These folks from around Morris County are charged with evaluating projects submitted to them from municipalities trying to preserve open space. In the past, we have received over 2 million dollars for our projects. How much will they give us in the future to protect our municipal water supply when they find out we have wasted \$525,000 of our own money on worthless swamps.
- 5) Future Township Committees - This action will open the door for future governing bodies to raid our open space fund for other bogus "deals".

→ My fellow Montville Township residents, I call upon this township committee to reject this proposal. I add that our own Montville Township Open Space Committee recommended not to purchase these wetlands. I believe that the developer, who is an honest and outstanding citizen, should be allowed to build his project that conforms to all of the laws in our town. I believe that the planning board should work with future tenants of the offices to lessen the traffic load on Changebridge Road.

I believe that the passage of this ordinance will lead to dismay, confusion, and eventually anger on the part of our residents.



Bob Purnell
Montville Township Committeeman