

August 15, 2014

TO: Camden County Freeholders,
Camden County Parks Division; CCOS Director Jack Sworaski
& Walt Whitman Arts Center
c/o Elizabeth Hanson Kuehner Trust
201 Cedar Avenue
Somerdale, NJ 08083

RE: Passive Open Space Preservation Stewardship
of Block 61, Lot 1 & Block 62, Lot 5, Laurel Springs, NJ

Dear Friends:

I have been a resident of Laurel Springs for 60 years. As a young boy, I spent a great deal of time fishing, catching frogs, salamanders and turtles — and having as much fun as a boy could have — along the banks of Laurel Lake. Back then, we had access to the entire length of the lake, from Laurel Road to Crystal Springs. Today, kids (and adults) have limited access to those magical places, but make the most of what they have.

Now I worry that the last, best spot for people to enjoy the lake will go the way of so many others. The Kuehner family's property (cited above) is, and has been, a great source of recreation and relaxation for kids and adults alike for many, many years. I would like to see it stay that way. Preserving it as Passive Open Space is, I believe, the best way to achieve this.

My opinion on this matter comes not only from my own experience and sentimental attachment to our beautiful lake, but also from having served both as a member of the Borough Council and as Mayor of Laurel Springs. If a developer or individuals purchase the property, they will surely build homes on it. Many people make the argument that building on the property will provide Laurel Springs with needed tax revenue. In fact, building homes creates a tax deficit. Homes inevitably produce children. Children must be educated. If a home produces \$12,000 of annual tax revenue, and has 2 children residing in it, the present cost of sending those 2 children to school for one year will be approximately \$30,000. Not to mention services that must be provided, access and egress for firefighting, and a host of other things. Building more homes would not be in the best interest of Laurel Springs taxpayers.

I believe the best way to preserve this beautiful natural space, preserve the integrity of the environment in the area, and do what is best for our taxpayers, is to preserve the property as Passive Open Space.

I sincerely hope you will consider my opinion on this matter.

Thank You,

Former Mayor Rob Hagen
709 Park Avenue, Laurel Springs, NJ 08021