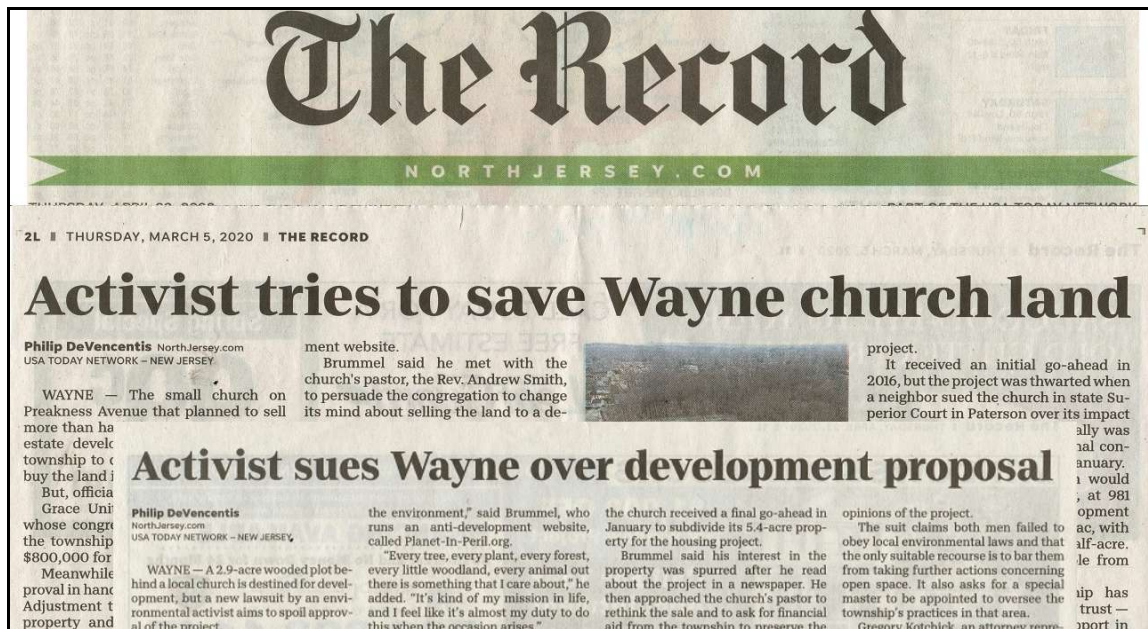


We Need A Volunteer From The Neighborhood To Join The Lawsuit To Save The Grace-Church Forest !



May 9, 2020 -- A **legal-technical-glitch** has put the lawsuit to save the forest at the Grace United Presbyterian Church in **jeopardy**. But it will instantly be fixed *if a neighbor agrees to join the suit!*

We have a strong case to save the forest! A week ago, on April 30th, the Judge agreed to issue a preliminary injunction, except for a single issue now being argued:

The **legal** “standing” we exercised under a New Jersey statute is being challenged over a failure to give advance “notice” -- a debatable point. However, a neighbor enjoys **automatic** “standing”, and the issue *will go away!*

A volunteer 'intervenor' will require little effort or expense. You only need to agree to stand up, and make a small effort to understand the case (see over).

This case has demonstrated serious rule-breaking by the Township officials who permitted 'development' over Township's own environmental rules. We can create real change if the lawsuit stays on track. Please see data-sheet for details about the case.

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Specifics of the Case to Save the Grace Forest:

The legal papers are viewable at this *simplified* Google Drive address: bit.ly/2xHgR5K or at a link from www.Planet-in-Peril.org.

As laid out in the **Complaint**, we set out **FOUR** strong grounds to challenge how the Township handled this property:

(1) **Mayoral abuse of power:** When the Church asked the Mayor in an email “sales inquiry” on February 26th if the Township would purchase the forest with open-space funds -- at a 25% discount -- the Mayor was required by law to give the issue to the “Open Space Committee” to decide, but he instead just told the Church -- in secret -- the Township was not interested, and the Church entered into a sales contract with a developer.

(2) **Zoning Board Error:** When the Zoning Board of Adjustment voted on the subdivision of the forest for five new houses and a new street on January 21st, **the Board was not told** of its mandate in the Township ordinances: "to the greatest extent possible" to assure "**Destruction of mature woodlands shall be minimized.**" (Township Ordinances, Section 134-90.1)

Instead, the Chairman told the Board that Wayne had plenty of enough open space, that this forest was not important, and "**property rights**" were the guiding principle for the Board.

(3) **The Township lacks an Open Space Committee** even though it is required under Township laws, and its duty is to determine what open space -- like the Church forest -- should be preserved, and how the Open Space Trust Fund was spent.

(4) **Open Space Fund:** Since the Mayor took office, the Township routinely fails to disclose, in the annual budget form, cumulative reporting on how the Open Space (etc.) Fund is being spent over time. Furthermore, there have been chronic discrepancies in the annual carry-overs of “reserve” funds.

This case highlights serious flaws in environmental protection in Wayne that have led over years to unnecessary destruction of open-space. There are large new developments that currently threaten the open-space that remains. This lawsuit is *not only* about the Grace Forest but about *all the woods* in Wayne. We need your help NOW. Thank you!

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