

Draft of Teaneck resolution regarding Area II in Overpeck.

WHEREAS the Township of Teaneck welcomes prudent remediation of contaminated public land to reduce risks to both human health and welfare and to affected ecological resources;

WHEREAS the Township of Teaneck in the 20th Century gifted key land parcels in Overpeck to the County with, in consideration for such gift, both the promise of appropriate and timely remediation and with the express purpose of developing much of it for “park purposes” – a purpose which the 21st Century Bergen County public, polled by the Parks Department, supports with a clear preference for increased open space and free public access to public lands, and

WHEREAS Bergen County is currently revising the Area II proposals originally sent to the several relevant offices within the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, plans which originally would have permitted a sizeable privately-operated fee-based Dinosaur amusement park in Overpeck’s Area II, and extensive area of paved parking, and

WHEREAS the size and scope of such a commercial enterprise for Area II would have set a dangerous precedent by adding to the significant portion of Overpeck Park already devoted to recreation activities and facilities. and

WHEREAS it is widely feared that the currently evolving Area II proposal may still negatively impact a heavily forested natural area intended to be kept as a nature preserve with forested trails/walking bridges and threatens to jeopardize one of few natural open space areas remaining, and

WHEREAS, the County has demonstrated that it has the capacity to devise and communicate a plan that combines precisely the kind of appropriate remediation and innovative riparian zone protection that should sustainably protect ecological resources in Overpeck Area I, and

WHEREAS the available forested land in Bergen County is, nevertheless, rapidly dwindling in the face of encroaching development, and

WHEREAS key sections of the natural habitat of numerous flora and fauna would be disrupted and likely destroyed through the placement of a substantial commercial Dinosaur Amusement Park and any accompanying ziplines, paved parking lot(s), new sewage systems, amphitheater, gift shop and food vending stalls, and

WHEREAS, the natural fauna in Overpeck Area II will logically seek other areas to live including deer who will make their way to Teaneck and neighboring Leonia further exacerbating an already serious concern, and

WHEREAS, there are some elements of the current plan which positively contribute to the public good including the remediation of land in Area II for the building of new trails, boardwalks and a footbridge across Teaneck Creek to expand public access to these open spaces without disturbing the ecosystems or the equilibrium of the open spaces themselves, and

WHEREAS, many Teaneck residents have expressed their objections to the negative aspects of the prior proposal and have often appeared before the Bergen County Board of Freeholders to say so,

- NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, The Environmental Commission of the Township of Teaneck: Urges Bergen County officials to provide the interested public with information about its evolving plans and provide opportunities for the public to enter into dialogue about new plans for Overpeck Area II,
- And urges the County to consider making Overpeck Area II, though clearly an area in need of some well-targeted appropriate near-term remediation, a long-term environmental preserve that preserves environmentally-valuable open space that is free of additional recreational facilities.

Resolution adopted by the Teaneck Environmental Commission on January 7, 2019.