

## India Brook Park Diversion Description for Scoping Hearing

Mendham Township is proposing a diversion of approximately 3.6 acres of parkland at India Brook Park (also known as the Seeing Eye property), Located at 97 Ironia Road, Mendham, NJ. As compensation for the proposed diversion, Mendham Township proposes to work with Randolph Township to preserve and permanently dedicate for park purposes approximately 35.8 acres of land known as Block 49, Lot 2, Randolph Township located between Calais Road and Doby Road.

The diversion land at India Brook Park consists of two kennels, a duplex, a garage and a house situated along Ironia Road. These were the former breeding facilities and infrastructure for the Seeing Eye. The kennels would be used by the Randolph Animal Pound and the houses would be used for municipal purposes. The current Animal Pound facility in Randolph is inadequate and it is not feasible to renovate or expand it. Randolph Township currently provides Animal Control services to Mendham and in exchange for Mendham leasing the kennels to Randolph, Randolph would renovate and stabilize the North Kennels, which are falling into disrepair.

Because Green Acres funding was used to acquire the India Brook Park property, it is "funded parkland" and Mendham Township would have to apply to the Department of Environmental Protection Green Acres Program for a "diversion" of this land because the proposed use is not recreation or conservation. Mendham Township Acquired the entire 103 acre Seeing Eye property in 2001 for \$3,325,000, of which \$2,256,208 was funded from the Mendham Township Open Space Trust, \$500,000 was funded by the Morris County Preservation Trust, and \$468,793 was funded by the NJDEP Green Acres Program.

Diversion of this approximately 3.6 acres would not have an adverse effect on the athletic field or any other current passive recreation or conservation use of the remaining property. Furthermore, it is proposed that if, in the future, the buildings were to be removed, the land would revert to park use.

The diversion would serve a public purpose by providing Randolph Township with a location for their Animal Pound as well as allow the township to use the two houses and garage on the property. It would also replace the affected parkland on an almost 10:1 basis with nearby land that is much more suitable for recreation and conservation purposes.