

TOWNSHIP OF WEST ORANGE

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

February 7, 2019

**MAYOR ANNOUNCES PROPOSED PURCHASE OF
ROCK SPRING CLUB**

Mayor Robert D. Parisi of the Township of West Orange announced today that he will present to the Township Council a contract to purchase Rock Spring Club. “This is a critical step in the Township’s desire to maintain open space, build and operate recreational facilities for the future, and plan in a proactive manner,” said Mayor Parisi. “I am excited about the possibilities that acquiring Rock Spring Club provides for the entire Township.”

Rock Spring Club consists of approximately 138 acres located on Northfield Avenue near Walker and Rock Spring Roads. Rock Spring has been a private country club for many decades. Approximately three years ago, Montclair Golf Club merged with Rock Spring Club to complement its 36 hole golf course located on the northerly border of West Orange and Verona. Montclair Golf Club announced approximately sixty days ago that it would not open the Rock Spring course this year and would sell the property.

“Immediately upon learning of the potential sale of Rock Spring, the Township began a series of meetings and discussions with the County of Essex and the Montclair Golf Club Board of Trustees. Simultaneously, we began exploring the options and possibilities for this critical tract of land,” reported Mayor Parisi.

As a result of various negotiations and Council approval of required enabling resolutions and contracts at its February 5th meeting, the Township is poised to move forward with its due diligence.

“We have already received environmental reports which are being evaluated by our outside environmental consultants. We will present a bond issue to the Township Council for consideration at its February 19th meeting along with a contract concerning this proposed acquisition,” indicated Mayor Parisi.

At this point, the Township intends to seek competitive proposals to obtain a professional golf course management company to run the course and related operations.

Eventually, a thoughtful and open planning process will occur where the Township will consider whether the golf course should continue with 18 holes or, as may be appropriate, 9 holes. “The recent trend toward fewer holes takes into account busy professionals and others who love golf but don’t necessarily have the time or resources to spend approximately four hours on a course,” Mayor Parisi said. “More importantly, by reducing the footprint of the golf course, there may be other recreational needs which can be accommodated, including a recreational center, walking and jogging paths, and exercise stations which are prevalent at many areas throughout the country. Some small complementary development to maintain the property tax base or locate Township facilities may be appropriate but that will be all part of the process for determining the eventual need and resources within the Township.”

The contract, which is in the midst of being finalized, is for a purchase price of \$11.28 million – far less than the current assessed value of approximately \$15 million. Closing would occur between April 30 and June 30 if Town Council

approves the transaction, and the Township will be entitled to a credit of \$3,000 for every day prior to June 30 that closing occurs, which could reduce the purchase price to \$11.1 million.

“Closing as quickly as possible will permit Rock Spring to operate this season,” stated Mayor Parisi.

At the February 5th Council Meeting, the Council unanimously approved expedited due diligence to finalize the analysis as to whether to purchase the property.

Mayor Parisi thanked the longtime members of Rock Spring Club and many others throughout the community who have reached out and asked the Township to preserve the course and open space. “This is an incredibly important goal which we will strive to maintain to the greatest extent possible. We are beginning a process that would allow the Township to control the destiny of this centrally located land. We encourage everyone’s input and support.”

Mayor Parisi intends to have a public Town Hall meeting after the February 19th Council Meeting but before the second reading and final adoption of the bond ordinance.

For more information, contact Mayor Parisi at 973-325-4100.



Cable Lake