

**Williams Township Land Preservation Board
Minutes, February 26, 2019 Meeting**

Present: Bob Schmidt, Ron Hine, Jim Williams, Polly Clark, Linda Heindel
Supervisor: Ray Abert

Chairman Schmidt opened the business meeting at 7:03 pm. He led the group in the salute to the flag. The January 22, 2019, minutes were approved (moved Hine, 2nd Williams) 4-0.

Updates on Preservation Projects/Applications/Shows of interest

Nehoda and Walter projects – Laura Baird, Heritage Conservancy, is working on the applications to the County. Deadline is March 15.

Melchor – Continuing to gather information and questions to be asked. The fee simple program in Morris County, NJ, listed the following requirements for a fee simple purchase: farm must be strategically located, meet or exceed county average in size and score, be evaluated for soil quality, percentage of tillable acres, proximity to other preserved farms, and provide local support for agriculture.

More options to explore:

- talk to Miklas Realty agent used by Moore Twp. to see what information they had in preparing to sell their two farms
- talk with Brian Harris, now township manager in Muhlenberg Township, Berks County
- talk with relevant person in Lower Makefield Township, Bucks County, whose realtor did they use (Heindel)
- determine costs of maintenance of the property, what security would be needed if township owned the property
- ask township code enforcement officer to inspect the house
- talk with neighboring farmers about potential interest

Hine to call Harold Melchor to ascertain persistence of commitment to project; to give permission to review the house (Schmidt to ask Doerr to join in the review), barn, and other buildings; to discuss getting the appraisal

Appraisal – Schmidt has bid from Indian Valley; he will obtain bid from a second appraiser (LH list sent to LPB), then present options to Supervisors at April meeting.

Old Business

None

New Business.

1. Treasurer's report shows \$1,966,924.28.
2. Money needed: ca \$400K, possibly by September for Nehoda and Walters projects --
3. LPB pondered a number of revisions to the investment plan for the Open Space Account: investing a significant portion of the money currently in Savings account, where it earns miniscule interest (0.5%), into additional CD's; utilizing that money together with upcoming CD's of 3-months (2.5%) and 6-months (2.7%), sequentially so they don't all come due at same time and to assure available funding for upcoming and potential projects. Schmidt will consult with Township Treasurer before any recommendations are made to the Supervisors at the March meeting.
4. Discussion of whether to put the EIT issue on the referendum this year: consensus of LPB was to wait to see how many of our current projects come to fruition.

No Announcements

Audience Comments –

1. Inquiry from township resident in January was reviewed, and the 11-A. flag lot reveals very little for preservation after house cutout is removed; project does not look feasible.
2. A second township resident asked about selling portion of his small tract (ca. 1.5 A. of a 3-A. lot) to the township. Schmidt referred him to the township about direct purchase.
3. Shana Goodchild, a preservation officer in Tewkesbury Twp., Hunterdon County, living in Williams Twp., offered some comparative comments about farmland preservation in NJ.

Meeting adjourned at 8:32 pm on motion (moved Williams, 2nd Hine) 4-0.

Submitted,
Linda Heindel, Secretary

Next meeting: Tuesday, March 26, 2019, 7:00 p.m.