

Williams Township Land Preservation Board Minutes, December 22, 2020 Virtual Meeting

Present: Bob Schmidt, Ron Hinehline, Ron Reichard, Linda Heindel
Supervisors: Ray Abert, Mark Ernst, Mike Bryant
Township Managers: Mikal Sabatine, Melody Ernst
Heritage Conservancy consultant Laura Baird

Chairman Schmidt opened the meeting at 7:02 pm. He called for a review of the November 24, 2020 minutes. Motion (moved Hinehline, 2nd Heindel) to approve the minutes passed 3-0.

Updates–

Russell– Baird is working on the language in the Agreement of Sale. No comment on any action by the County Council's Subcommittee on Open Space.

Boss– Consideration of two factors in the project: owner's desire for timbering prior to or after the easement and owner's objection to any public access. LPB discussed the issues of safety, given the number of ponds/ore holes and close proximity of a number of other residences to the narrow tract. LPB members felt that the property met a number of conservation values enunciated in the Williams Township Open Space Plan – the steep slopes, presence of a PNDI species, contribution of water from 3 springs and 2 ponds to the value of preserving township watershed, potential for becoming a park in the future, protection of endangered species. Schmidt queried whether LPB should ask the BOS what they would want to know further about the property. In the County's plan for the *21st Century* and *Lehigh Valley Greenways*, there is a recognition that access, including hunting, may not be appropriate for all properties if the natural resources are to be protected.

Motion: (moved Hinehline, 2nd Schmidt) to present this property to the Board of Supervisors, was approved 4-0. Schmidt will present to the BOS the request for support, up to the full amount of \$102,000, the Agreement of Sale, the forest stewardship plan, and the waiver of public access.

O'Brien – Indian Valley just completed the appraisal. Based on a large number of comparables (properties both before preservation and after preservation) the appraisal resulted in \$8,000/Acre. 18.7A can be funded at highest protection for \$149,600. Pasturing of goats became a non-issue. LPB agreed to present the project to the BOS, and to ask the County for 50%, if possible, but failing that, to ask the Township for the full amount.

To allow LPB members (who just received the appraisal today) to study the data, the vote will be taken at the January meeting. Owners are willing to allow some public access at the northern border of their tract.

Old Business – BOS adopted the AOS at their December 2020 meeting.

New Business

Treasurer's Report – Hinehline circulated the November report. Total \$2,020,579.73. Melody Ernst renewed for 6 months the CD's that came due. Schmidt noted that there is sufficient money to cover the three projects.

Announcements – All cheered that 2020 was ending.

Audience comments – Holiday greetings were shared all 'round.

The meeting was adjourned on motion (moved Hinehline, 2nd Schmidt) at 7:38 pm.

Submitted,
Linda Heindel, Secretary

Next Meeting (virtual): January 26, 2021, 7 pm