

**Williams Township Land Preservation Board Minutes,  
April 26, 2022 Meeting at the Williams Township Community Building,  
655 Cider Press Rd., Easton, PA 18042**

Present: Bob Schmidt, Ken Kodama, Lorraine Mineo; Supervisor, Ray Abert; Guests, Eileen Schmidt, Polly Clark [former Alternate], Fred Mebus [former Supervisor].

Vice Chairman Schmidt opened the meeting at 7:05 pm. He called for the Pledge of Allegiance then a review of the March 22, 2022 minutes. Motion to approve the minutes was moved by Ken Kodama, seconded by Lorraine Mineo. Motion was approved 3-0 (Schmidt, Kodama, Mineo).

Updates

Ballek Road 2020-1 This property still needs the ‘Preserved Property’ sign. Bob Schmidt reported that Northampton County closed out the grant for signage, but the final design will still employ the specifications provided by Northampton County. We are waiting for the new design being prepared by Heritage. The final sign will contain three logos: Northampton County, Williams Township, and The Heritage Conservancy.

Berger Road 2021 -1 The landowner signed the Agreement of Sale, so this project is now moving ahead. Mike Sabatine, Williams Township Manager, gave the surveyors instruction to begin the survey of this parcel. The Heritage Conservancy will write the Application for the County at the agreed cost. Jim Williams, in a recent email, indicated that this step will likely take considerable time. Bob Schmidt will follow up with Heritage by phone to inquire when they will start writing the Application.

Raubsville 2021 -2 The owner of this parcel has terminated the preservation process with the Land Preservation Board so this project is now defunct. This action has happened only once before in the history of the Land Preservation Board [LPB]. This situation prompted a discussion of how to minimize an outcome such as this in the future. An escrow requirement was discussed as a way to protect township funds dedicated to preservation. For example, an escrow requirement of \$500 or so at the appraisal or survey stage could be refunded after the Agreement Of Sale was signed. Some of us thought this would be a deterrent for potential candidates and add more confusion to the process. A vote on the use of an escrow requirement was tabled until the full board could be present. Meanwhile inquiries about the use of escrow funds in the preservation process should be made by asking Jonathan Reiss, Township Attorney, how other townships handle this. As an overview, the costs incurred at this stage of the preservation process were: the appraisal [\$2400] , a site visit by The Heritage Conservancy [\$1500] and a minimal cost for the township attorney to draw up the Agreement of Sale. In summary, these costs appeared minimal when compared with the payout to finally preserve a parcel and considered by some of us as the “cost of doing LPB business” and should probably be accepted as such.

Old Business -

The outreach letters to three different landowners with parcels of high potential for preservation were reviewed. Bob Schmidt indicated that meetings with the family owning the Deemer Rd. property is in progress, and this replaces what would have been a rather complex topic for a letter. The draft letter for the Cider Press Road property was approved; motion made by Ken Kodama, seconded by Lorraine Mineo. Motion passed 3-0. This letter is to be sent to the Township Manager and put on Township letterhead before mailing. The draft letter to the family owning the Wottrings Mill Road property sustained minor revisions. These revisions were made by Ken Kodama and will be circulated to all members including those not present. A vote on this revised letter was tabled until the next meeting.

Preserved property maps discussion was deferred until the May meeting.

Preserved property Annual Monitoring Reports are probably not done yet. For example, the Ballek Road 2020-1 property was not done yet and is scheduled for monitoring in May.

New Business -

Bob reported \$1.9 million plus in the Open Space Account. See Treasurer's Report.

Invoices for expenses attributable to the Open Space Fund were shared. See BOS's Treasurer's Report.

There were no Announcements.

Adjournment at 8:20 pm.

Next meeting : May 24, 2022 at 7 PM, Williams Twp. Community Bldg.