

Williams Township Land Preservation Board (LPB)

Minutes March 28, 2023

Williams Township Community Building

655 Cider Press Rd., Easton, PA 18042

Present: Bob Schmidt, Ken Kodama, Lorraine Mineo, Tom Heilman, and Lori Cox; Alternate Polly Clark; Supervisors Ray Abert and George Washburn; previous LPB member Linda Heindel; and residents.

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Bob Schmidt at 7:02 PM.

He called for the Pledge of Allegiance, then a review of the February 28, 2023 minutes. Motion moved by Mineo, seconded by Schmidt. Approved 5-0.

Updates on Preservation Projects:

- 2021-1 Berger Road: The property owner was present later on in the meeting. Heritage Conservancy (Heritage) was at the property and identified concerns: brush pile, two old farms dumps, a turkey pen in the High Protection Area (HPA) which was previously a non-issue, and trailers partially and temporarily in HPA. Heritage's attorney said closing cannot proceed unless severability clauses are added to the Agreement of Sale. The clauses would state that the brush pile should be cleaned up before the first annual inspection and that the turkey pen would need to be removed if the owners sell or are no longer going to use it. Trailers can stay until the property is sold, or if they are no longer in use, or become inoperable. Having the clauses in place will shift the HPA lines. Regarding the dump, the owner cleaned up as much as he could, and Heritage said the remainder could be left. Closing should be in April 2023. Mineo will contact Melody Ernst at the township office to request that funds be transferred from savings to checking to cover closing costs.
- 2022-2-Morgan Hill: The property owner was present. Sherry Acevedo of Northampton County (NORCO) had initially said owners should have the two parcels/deeds in the same name, which they did. NORCO is now saying having two parcels/deeds is not acceptable but did not state why. NORCO recommended that the LPB consult the township attorney about this and also about how the owners may want to sell the north parcel in the future. Schmidt will consult the township manager. Also, there was discussion, including audience comments, about precedence and how NORCO makes their decisions. An audience member asked how many acres the property is and if it is continuous with other preserved properties and yes, the approximately 80-acre property is. Another audience member asked if there are quotes for appraisal, no, Schmidt is working on getting quotes. The property owner asked if once the property is preserved, can one of the two parcels be sold. To date, this situation has not come up. Previous sales have been for all the preserved parcels in a conservation project and would need to be looked into.

- 2023-1 Steely Hill: It is now known that Heritage is exclusive to Williams Township for conservancy projects. The original easement documentation for the powerlines has not been found yet. Per Matt Babbitt of Heritage, there is no need to wait for the easement question to be answered prior to moving forward with the appraisal. Schmidt got appraisal quotes from Indian Valley: \$2,600 and the Frederick Group: \$3,500. A vote was needed to ask the Board of Supervisors (BOS) to spend money on the appraisal. Kodama made a motion to ask the BOS for approval for funds not to exceed \$2,600 for Indian Valley to perform the appraisal and Mineo seconded the motion. Unanimous approval

Old Business: The LPB welcomed new board member, Tom Heilman.

New Business:

- LPB alternate member interest: A resident, Ben White, attended the meeting as he is interested in serving as an alternate board member. White shared his interest in preserving the rural characteristics of Williams Township. Mineo also shared that she spoke with Walt Russell about the possibility of serving as an alternate. Russell was not able to make the meeting tonight. An executive session will be held before the next LPB meeting on April 25, 2023 @ 6:45 PM to discuss applicant.
- Complaint about Heritage staff: Mineo shared that Russell reported to her that he experienced unpleasantness with Sebastian Harris of Heritage. Harris was at Russell's property to do the annual inspection this month. Russell reported to Mineo that Harris told him that he had parked his trailer in the HPA, which Russell said was not true. Additionally, Russell informed Mineo that Harris had issues with old farm equipment which was never identified as an issue before.
- Potential land preservation projects: For County Line Road and Echo Ridge Road, the residents were interested in gathering more information about the preservation process. The LPB will wait for them to outreach or attend a meeting.
- Heritage Conservancy Memorandum of Understanding (MOU): Mr. Sabatine had forwarded the MOU to the LPB for review and discussion on February 28, 2023, which outlines the agreement between the township and Heritage. Kodama was not present for the last meeting and tonight is Heilman's first meeting. Discussion of the MOU was tabled so Kodama and Heilman can have a chance to review the document.

Treasurer's Report: Reported by Mineo. Checking account: \$16,688.32, savings account: \$397,445.08, CD: \$1.5 million, total: \$1,914,133.40. Invoices from the law office note charges the LPB does not recognize and there was a question as to why this was being paid out of LPB funds. This may have to do with a drainage project for a preserved property adjacent to the Painter Farm development. An audience member commented that the Painter Farm developer should have an escrow account to pay attorney fees related to the drainage project. Schmidt will consult Sabatine.

Announcements: Schmidt noted that a day after the LPB meeting, the month's prior approved meeting minutes should be submitted to Katherine Faubert so that they can be posted on the township website.

Comments from audience: Heilman shared that currently, there is a multi-planet alignment viewable if facing west and that the township office grounds are a good spot to view from.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:31 PM Mineo moved, Kodama seconded. Unanimous approval.

Next meeting April 25, 2023 @ 7:00 PM, Williams Township Community Building.