

Williams Township Land Preservation Board (LPB)

Minutes October 24, 2023

Williams Township Community Building

655 Cider Press Rd., Easton, PA 18042

Present: Bob Schmidt, Ken Kodama, Lorraine Mineo, Lori Cox, and Tom Heilman; Alternates Polly Clark and Michael Cortright; Supervisor Ray Abert; and township residents

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Bob Schmidt at 7:01 PM.

He called for the Pledge of Allegiance, then a review of the September 26, 2023 minutes. Motion to approve the minutes made by Heilman, seconded by Kodama. Approved 5-0.

Updates on Preservation Projects:

- 2022-2-Morgan Hill: Property owner was present. South/lower parcel. The Board of Supervisors (BOS) approved appraisal by Indian Valley in their last meeting. Once the township office formally signs off, Indian Valley can do the appraisal.
- 2023-4 Morgan Hill: Property owner was present. North/upper parcel. A Pennsylvania Natural Diversity Inventory (PNDI) report came back with a hit and the board discussed adding 10 points to the property's score for a total of 160 points. Schmidt outreached for appraisal quotes. Indian Valley quoted \$2,600. Imperial recommended Indian Valley while Snyder Appraisal quoted \$5,900. Mineo made a motion to recommend the north parcel to the BOS for appraisal by Indian Valley, Kodama seconded, approved 5-0.
- 2023-1 Steely Hill: No updates on Med-Ed easement. BOS voted last meeting to approve the two changes that the property owners requested (mushroom farming and taking firewood offsite). This was the last thing that Sherry Acevedo of Northampton County (NORCO) needed for county application. Heilman raised a concern about the owners being able to take about 10 trees per year for firewood (not to be more than 200 feet in circumference total). The concern is that properties that are not as heavily wooded would be more affected. Additionally, there is concern about taking all the trees from one location. Schmidt said that for future easements, the township solicitor could be asked to put something in the easement about forestry management and make recommendations to the BOS. Lastly, Matt Babbitt will send the application into NORCO. The next step would be getting quotes for the survey.
- 2023-3 Morvale Road: BOS approved appraisal by Indian Valley in their last meeting. Once the township office formally signs off, Indian Valley can do the appraisal.

Old Business:

- LPB discussed the preservation sign for the Russell property. Heilman had 2 design drafts from Fast Signs and an estimate of \$265.75 for the 18" by 24" aluminum sign. Board discussed color, wording (preserved instead of protected), arrangement of logos, etc. Also discussed the possibility of having the owner's name mounted below the sign on the post. Heilman will relay the suggestions to Fast Signs and get another draft.
- Schmidt will contact the township office to print the map of preserved properties that Kodama received from Heritage.

- Schmidt was away for the last BOS meeting. He will appoint Baron and this will be on the BOS's November agenda. Additionally, the township office required a resignation letter from Clark, which Clark submitted to Schmidt.

New Business:

- Treasurer's Report: Mineo shared the LPB Financial Report for September 2023. Checking account \$3,210.98 savings account \$475,938.31, CD \$1,300,000.00, total \$1,779,149.29. Schmidt also shared that the Township Supervisor asked the LPB Chair what expenses would be forthcoming for budget purposes.
- NORCO has a new version of the model easement. NORCO wants language changed so it reads that they can do guided educational walks with owner's permission. It currently only reads that Heritage can. Schmidt will try to get the document so LBP can review this.

Announcements: None

Comments from audience: Nurit Baron, who is in the process of being recommended to BOS as an alternate LPB member, had some suggestions:

- Committees/subcommittees of board members to look into funding or fund raising for Land Preservation funds (sending out mailers, advertise on township website, etc). Schmidt can look into this, he is unsure if the Sunshine Laws permit getting a group of LPB members together. There has been a community group in the past and Schmidt will see if he can obtain the list of resident volunteers.
- Is there a list of preserved properties that can be posted on the township website and who manages the website? Schmidt said there is a list and he can check with the Township Supervisor who manages the website.
- Can pictures of preserved properties be posted on the township website? Mineo will ask a local photographer if she is interested in doing this if the township is in agreement. There was discussion about adding the map of preserved properties to the website too.
- Can the state of Pennsylvania help pay for preservation, such as the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR)? Schmidt noted that in the past funds were received from DCNR but they are now only doing parks and recreation projects. Schmidt also shared that the township used to apply for funding but the applications cost money, they were strict with public access rules, and all other funding must be in place. Cortright asked if Heritage has ideas on how to go about a referendum for funds to preserve. Schmidt stated that the township just signed on to the Lower Delaware Wild and Scenic River a few months ago and they mentioned funding for advertising an open space referendum.
- Finally, does someone on the board do educational talks to the community about what LPB is doing and Schmidt said that they have done this before. There were discussions on how it helps lower taxes, lessen traffic, reduce stress on schools, etc. There was also discussion on organizing a referendum to raise taxes for Land Preservation funds. Baron will look into what needs to be done to get it on an election ballot.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:24 PM. Cox moved, Kodama seconded. Unanimous approval.

Next meeting November 28, 2023 @ 7:00 PM, Williams Township Community Building.

Submitted,

Lori Cox, Secretary