

Williams Township Land Preservation Board (LPB)
Minutes December 19, 2023
Williams Township Community Building
655 Cider Press Rd., Easton, PA 18042

Present: Bob Schmidt, Lorraine Mineo, Lori Cox, and Tom Heilman; Supervisor Ray Abert and Michael Bryant; and township residents

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Bob Schmidt at 7:04 PM.

He called for the Pledge of Allegiance, then a review of the November 28, 2023 minutes. Motion to approve the minutes made by Mineo, seconded by Heilman. Approved 4-0.

Updates on Preservation Projects:

- 2022-2- and 2023-4 Morgan Hill: Property owner was present. Mineo, Schmidt, and Matt Babbitt from Heritage Conservancy met with the property owners last week. The owners wish to preserve the two parcels separately. Babbitt will speak with the appraiser this Friday, December 22, 2023. The appraisal reports should be ready before December 23, 2023.
- 2023-1 Steely Hill: The application to Northampton County (NORCO) for funding needed to be withdrawn. There were items that were not in the application, such as mushroom farming and firewood taking. The issue of the Met-Ed right of way easement was not resolved prior to doing the application. Additionally, NORCO only recently informed LPB that they want to change the model easement language, which NORCO has not yet finalized. Once NORCO finalizes the language, LPB can reapply. This is expected to be in January or February of 2024. Babbitt also spoke with the property owners about the language in NORCO's new model easement and they are in agreement to it.
- 2023-3 Morvale Road: Property owner was present and he shared that he had reviewed the appraisal report, which is \$13,000/acre. Factors that may have affected the appraisal amount could have been the adjacent landfill, property comparables, including the new Tumble Creek development, and steep slopes. There was also a discussion about the property's actual acreage, which will be confirmed after a survey. The next step is for LPB to ask the Board of Supervisors (BOS) for funding. Mineo made a motion to ask the BOS to approve this project for funding and Cox seconded, approved 4-0.

Old Business:

- For the Russell property preservation sign, there was a discussion about enlarging the emblems. Discussed using two 10 foot steel posts and having the sign sit about 6 feet high. Heilman had also brought in a photograph that he took of the sign Heritage Conservancy put up on the Boss property. This is a two-sided sign which includes a post. Schmidt had outreached Babbitt to find out more, such as is the sign paid for out of the stewardship fee.
- Schmidt is still working on getting the map of preserved properties mounted on board, which can then be displayed in the township building.
- Schmidt has not received the new model easement from NORCO yet. It may become available in January or February 2024. NORCO will announce a workshop which one member of LPB will need to attend. Babbitt will be attending.
- For the Earned Income Tax (EIT) referendum, LPB has an idea of what might be spent on projects in 2024. It is not expected that four projects will be closed in 2024. So, the board still thinks it best to hold off on a referendum until some funds are spent down. It is also hoped that NORCO partners and assists with funding projects.

New Business:

- Treasurer's Report: Mineo shared the LPB Financial Report which now includes the updated numbers from November 2023. Mineo noted that Babbitt has been very active, including presenting at a BOS meeting, so there are more charges for his services. Mineo also noted that the totals include the interest from the \$1,000,000 CD. Based on the data available, checking account \$1,751.29, savings account \$477,415.70, and CD \$1,342,499.95, total \$1,821,666.94.

Announcements:

- Mineo shared that regarding Heilman's concern about the per density removal of trees by residents, she read the township ordinance. Mineo found that the ordinance is detailed and stringent. There was some question on who the township enforcement officer is. If a resident has any questions about tree removal, they can contact the township office.
- Schmidt requested that the township office keep all the board minutes on the website. Bryant will check into this.
- Schmidt announced that the township office is posting next year's board meetings on the website calendar. Schmidt stated that the LPB December 2024 meeting would fall on the 24th and it was agreed that the LPB will hold the meeting on December 17th instead.
- Schmidt also asked Babbitt if he would take part in a public workshop, which LPB's new alternate Nurit had suggested, and Babbitt was in agreement. All agreed we should have the workshop closer to when an EIT referendum is held.

Comments from audience: None

Meeting was adjourned at 8:08 PM. Heilman moved, Mineo seconded. Unanimous approval.

Next meeting January 23, 2024 @ 7:00 PM, Williams Township Community Building.

Submitted,

Lori Cox, Secretary