

Williams Township Land Preservation Board (LPB)

Minutes August 27, 2024

Williams Township Community Building

655 Cider Press Rd., Easton, PA 18042

Present: Ken Kodama, Bob Schmidt, Lorraine Mineo, Tom Heilman, Lori Cox, and Alternate Michael Cortright; Township Manager/Finance Director Melody Ernst; Board of Supervisor (BOS) Ray Abert, Matt Babbitt of Heritage Conservancy; township residents

Executive Session was held at 6:30 PM.

The meeting was then called to order by Chairperson Ken Kodama at 7:01 PM. He called for the Pledge of Allegiance, then a review of the July 23, 2024 minutes. Motion to approve the minutes made by Schmidt, seconded by Mineo. Approved 5-0.

Updates on Preservation Projects:

- 2022-2 and 2023-4: No updates for these projects. LPB is still waiting on Northampton County (NORCO) to release their new model easement.
- 2023-1: Heilman and Babbitt reported that the preservation sign was installed.
- 2023-3: No updates for this project. LPB is still waiting on NORCO to release their new model easement.
- Shows of interest:
 - Schmidt has not heard from the landowners. Babbitt suggested writing a letter to the owners on the township's letterhead and Kodama will work on this.
 - Schmidt had also received a call from another landowner who is interested in donating their easement but does not want to apply. Schmidt gave the owner Babbitt's contact information.

Old Business:

- Schmidt asked Babbitt for a file of the map which includes the latest preserved properties. Discussed how LPB wants a map in the township office and a larger one for the township's Community Building. Measurements and cost estimates are needed.
- Regarding the revised LPB procedures discussed in the July meeting, see attached document.

New Business:

- Treasurer's Report: Mineo shared the financial report as of July 2024: Checking account \$12,392.57, savings account \$104,712.81, and CD \$1,379,639.51, total \$1,496,744.89.
- Discussed Earned Income Tax (EIT) ballot referendum for open space funding. LPB will look at the last one the township did for guidance. Babbitt will share an example with LPB. Ernst will check with the Township Solicitor about a cap. Discussed timing and need for approval from the BOS.

Announcements:

- Schmidt announced that the annual Family Fun event at Fry's Run Park will be September 21, 2024 from 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM, rain date September 22, 2024.

Comments from audience:

- None.

Meeting was adjourned at 7:46 PM. Next meeting September 24, 2024 @ 7:00 PM, Williams Township Community Building.

Submitted, Lori Cox, Secretary

Land Preservation Board (LPB) Procedures

1. All communication between Northampton County (NORCO) and Williams Township is to go through Matt Babbitt of Heritage Conservancy. Babbitt will copy the Township Solicitor and Manager on everything.
2. Once the LPB has inspected a prospective property, scored the property, spoken with the property owners, and everything is good to move forward, then a title search will be ordered. Once the title search is back and everything is clear, an appraisal will be ordered.
3. Once there is sufficient information to complete NORCO's application and all of the title issues, if any, are resolved but before the application is fully completed and submitted to NORCO, Sherry Acevedo will be notified and asked to do a site visit.
4. There should be no discussing properties while other property owners are present at the LPB meetings. It is recommended that if the property owners have questions, they should be answered at the end of the meeting by the Chair and Babbitt. If Babbitt is not in attendance at the meeting, then the Chair and another member can meet with the owners.
5. After the LPB has received approval from the BOS for the appraisal and survey, Heritage Conservancy will order both. The appraisals and surveys will come to the Township Manager and then the Township Manager will distribute the same to Heritage Conservancy and the LPB.
6. A copy of the draft minutes should be sent to Babbitt so that he is in the loop as to what is happening.