

Williams Township Land Preservation Board (LPB)

Minutes February 25, 2025

Williams Township Community Building

655 Cider Press Rd., Easton, PA 18042

Present: Ken Kodama, Tom Heilman, Lorraine Mineo, Lori Cox, Michael Cortright, and Alternate Nurit Baron; Board of Supervisor (BOS) Ray Abert; Matt Babbitt of Heritage Conservancy (Heritage); township residents

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Ken Kodama at 7:00 PM. He called for the Pledge of Allegiance, then a review of the January 28, 2025 minutes. A motion to approve the minutes was made by Heilman and seconded by Mineo. The motion was approved 5-0.

Updates on Preservation Projects:

- 2022-2: Babbitt shared that for the Highland Grant, there was a vote to fund the project but no answer yet. They have until the end of February. There is ambiguity over the federal funds freeze and the grant requests exceed their available funds. Babbitt has drafted the Agreement of Sale (AOS), which is now under review by the township solicitor. Finalization is anticipated by February 26, 2025. He also did a presentation to the BOS members, who agreed to fund the project should the Highland Grant not come through. Additionally, there has been communication with Med-Ed regarding an amendment of the right of way (ROW) easement width and length.
- 2023-4 and 2023-3: Status updates for these projects are the same as noted for 2022-2.

Old Business:

- There was discussion about the feasibility of displaying a smaller version of the block style map of preserved properties in the Township Building due to lack of unobstructed wall space. It was suggested that the map may need to be presented on an easel instead. There was also discussion of how a map was wanted for an outdoor kiosk at the township park.
- Heilman and Baron attended the 2025 Northampton County (NORCO) Livable Landscapes Grant Program Workshop via Zoom, also attended by Babbitt. Heilman shared that it was

similar to last year's workshop. Babbitt reviewed that NORCO now has an online application with categories for land preservation and other projects such as parks, playgrounds, and municipal planning. Land preservation applications are accepted year-round while applications for other projects are due by April. A date for when land preservation applications can be submitted has not been announced yet. Babbitt noted that to apply for land preservation, one must first have a meeting with Sherry Acevedo of NORCO by March. The funding structure changed slightly and public access requirements were updated. Additionally, NORCO will use the "We Conserve" model easement, also used by Heritage and DCNR. Lastly, Babbitt clarified that NORCO does not reimburse for projects done prior.

New Business:

- Mineo made a motion to amend the agenda to address the Earned Income Tax (EIT) referendum process, Heilman seconded, approved unanimously.
- Hielman made a motion to discuss the EIT referendum, Mineo seconded, and approved unanimously.
- Kodama recapped the LPB's previous discussion about the EIT referendum, highlighting the decision to propose directly to the BOS due to time constraints, aiming for the November 2025 ballot. LPB discussed the timeline starting with the LPB's request on the March BOS meeting agenda and the formation of an external committee to promote the referendum. Additionally, it was suggested that Heritage run a workshop in April to educate residents about land preservation.
- Cox made a motion to recommend at the March BOS meeting that the BOS authorize the Township Solicitor to draft an EIT referendum, seconded by Cortright, approved unanimously.

Treasurer's Report: Mineo shared the financial report as of February 2025: Checking account after expenses \$13,298.27, savings account \$508,010.48, CD \$1,000,000.00, total \$1,521,308.75

Announcements:

- Heilman proposed updates for the township website, including correcting Cortright's title to Board Member, adding the preserved property map, updating acres preserved, and fixing the non-functioning hyperlink for Kodama. Kodama agreed to discuss these updates with the

Township Manager.

- Baron inquired about the efforts to acquire more properties for land preservation. Kodama explained that the board maintains a list of potential properties within the township, which over time, we have done some outreach to. Kodama mentioned a property whose owner was interested in preservation before and applied, perhaps outreaching this owner again may be a good idea.

Comments from audience: A township resident suggested including information about land preservation in the biannual township newsletter including details about the workshop by Heritage and a map of preserved properties. Also, another township resident said prior to the Heritage workshop, it would be good to mail a letter about it to township residents who own 10 or more acres of land.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:10 PM, following a motion by Cox, seconded by Mineo. The motion was approved unanimously.

Next meeting March 25, 2024 @ 7:00 PM, Williams Township Community Building.

Submitted,

Lori Cox,

Secretary