

Williams Township Land Preservation Board (LPB)

Minutes September 23, 2025

Williams Township Community Building

655 Cider Press Rd., Easton, PA 18042

Present: Ken Kodama, Tom Heilman, Lorraine Mineo, Michael Cortright, and Lori Cox; Board of Supervisor (BOS) Ray Abert; and township residents

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Ken Kodama at 7:02 PM. He called for the Pledge of Allegiance, then a review of the August 26, 2025 minutes. Mineo made a motion to approve the minutes, seconded by Cortright. The motion was approved 5-0.

Updates on Preservation Projects:

- 2022-2 (south parcel) and 2023-4 (north parcel): Kodama reported that Matt Babbitt of Heritage Conservancy (Heritage) did not have any updates on the survey, Baseline Documentation Report, or Met-Ed powerline right-of-way easement. Mineo made a motion for the LPB Chair to contact the Township Manager to request that the Township Solicitor contact Met-Ed. The motion was seconded by Cox and approved 5-0.
- 2023-3: Kodama reported that Babbitt had no updates on the status of the survey.
- 2025-1: Kodama reported that the BOS approved covering the project costs for the conservation easement. Regarding public access, Babbitt had not yet discussed this with the landowners. The Township Solicitor had advised that it would be up to the BOS to decide whether to require it, and the BOS voted to approve it without public access.
- 2025-2: Kodama reported that a site visit had been scheduled for September 19, 2025 but the landowner needed to reschedule. This property is 23 acres; the landowner wishes to preserve 20 acres and set aside three acres for building a home. The property has a pond, stream, wetlands, and Met-Ed powerlines.

Old Business:

- Regarding the Earned Income Tax (EIT) referendum, Kodama reported that the EIT committee, Preserve Williams, held the workshop last week to provide information about preservation and the referendum. The workshop was well attended.
- For the Township website, Heilman shared that the website now has the scoring criteria LPB uses for reviewing property applications.
- Mineo updated the board on contacting landowners about installing signs for past preservation projects. She sent example photos to one landowner and is awaiting a response. Another landowner expressed interest in a sign, but there are concerns about placement.
- Mineo reported no new information on the township's process for maintaining an updated list of preserved properties.

New Business:

- None.

Treasurer's Report: Mineo shared the August 2025 LPB financial reports: checking account \$15,264.21 and savings account \$1,509,665.20, total \$1,524,929.41.

Announcements:

- Kodama announced that a resident interested in joining the LPB was in attendance. The LPB shared information about the alternate vacancy, and the resident expressed interest in land preservation.
- Kodama also reported that another resident asked whether they could request to add concerns about a preserved property to the LPB's October agenda. Kodama will check with the Township Manager, but it is understood that the resident can provide comments during the "comments from audience" portion of the meeting.

Comments from audience:

- Landowners with pending projects expressed concerns about the length of the conservation process and communication with Heritage. Property surveys have taken many months. One landowner shared that the survey was initiated in April 2025 and they recently received a request to give a three-month extension for the Agreement of Sale. Another landowner reported their project has been going on for three years.
- Residents had questions and comments about land preservation:
 - One resident asked if the EIT referendum question could be worded differently to limit the tax collection period to five years. It was explained that the referendum language is set by the State of Pennsylvania and cannot be changed by the township. However, residents may request that the BOS end the tax if there is a surplus of funds.
 - A resident asked who has oversight of the land preservation fund. It was clarified that this responsibility lies with the BOS.
 - A resident asked whether the LPB has contacted the state representative or county leadership regarding the delays. The state representative has not been contacted, but a BOS member has met with the County Executive. Kodama will follow up with the Township Manager.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 PM, following a motion by Kodama, seconded by Heilman. The motion was approved 5-0.

Next meeting October 28, 2025 @ 7:00 PM, Williams Township Community Building.

Submitted,

Lori Cox, Secretary