

**East Pikeland Township
Open Space Committee**

**Meeting Minutes
April 24, 2018**

Meeting called to order at 7:02pm

Present: Rusty Strauss, Betsy Burns, John Schott, Stock Illoway, Lori Beck, and Kersten Appler

Absent: Martin Sheehan

Staff: Michelle Rubin

Minutes from the March meeting were approved with no changes.

New Business

1. May meeting date change to 5/22 (election)
 - Michelle asked if committee members were ok with a date change for the next meeting due to the election night. A few members wouldn't be able to attend so the members proposed May 23. Michelle will check the Township calendar to make sure that date works and will send a confirmation email to the committee.

2. Database work—fill in information for top 5 properties
 - Re-selected priority properties and will fill in information in the coming weeks.
 - Selected priority properties include:
 - i. Davis
 - ii. Crouse
 - iii. Steimer
 - iv. Dixon
 - v. Wagner

Old Business

1. Appraisal price update
 - Stock gave a report on a potential option for paying above the appraised value on a property to make the Township more competitive. He reported that at French and Pickering Creek Conservation Trust they are tracking a potential option. A neighboring Township's solicitor decided that they could go 10% over the appraisal value for the conservation value of the land because the appraisal doesn't consider the conservation value. French and Pickering Creek has been working with an attorney to figure out the legality and steps for securing this option. The attorney also said the Township could make a donation out of open space funds to a conservation organization who then might be able to put together a grant to help with the purchase of the property in question. French and Pickering Creek is in the process of investigating how that might work, but it could maybe work here to make up for appraisal and price being far apart and find a way to narrow the gap. There is still legal work to do.
 - Rusty would like to see an official legal opinion on that process. He also mentioned that the language used in the referendum might matter. Ours uses the term, "real property" and if the conservation group isn't living up to that definition then it wouldn't work.
 - Stock will get us more information as it becomes available, but he would like to take the ordinance and talk with a solicitor.
 - Rusty reminded the committee that the ordinance wording is also in the Dropbox under the documents folder

- John asked if we could ask the appraiser to include the conservation value in the appraisal to increase the potential value because we can't pay over appraisal?
 - Kersten said she had thought of that too, but appraisers are usually beholden to strict rules. Stock thought it was still worth looking into.
 - A member asked what would be included in the conservation value and it was explained that it could be water quality, viewshed, neighboring another Township property under conservation easement, etc. so they would score the property based on those conservation values.

2. Brief property updates:

- Crouse/Pikeland Glen
 - Michelle reported that the appraiser, Jacob Bohem, will send her the appraisal report by Friday and then she will inform the Committee of the results.
- Davis
 - Stock hasn't followed up, waiting to hear back about the finances options.
 - John reported that Kyle Davis approached the Planning Commission and informed them that they are actively working with a developer. Also, the family has come to a settlement on their disagreements.
 - Stock suggested that we try to get a copy of their appraisal.
- Steimer
 - Michelle met with Jim Steimer and Jay Pollinger, Fire Chief. She reported that she explained his options and he said that he had talked with the Fire Company and they had agreed to continue on as they had been. He would like to see the land stay open space but his mother is the current owner and after she passes, he and his brother will have to jointly decide what they would like to do with the property and he isn't sure where his brother stands.
 - The committee suggested that we look into the brother's contact information to talk with him about options so that he is also informed.
- Wagner
 - Rusty reported that he hasn't heard anything about Wagner. Our appraisal was from 2014 and land values have changed some but who knows if it's worth updating. Rusty said let them do their own appraisal and see what theirs comes back as.
 - John said we may need an updated appraisal because the uses on the zoning have changed to be more attractive. But it's only on the front few lots that were affected.
- Water World
 - John reported that he and members of the planning commission have met with two developers who are interested in properties along 724 including Water World and the Harpoon Louies. The developers were trying to talk with other surrounding properties to combine the properties into one large purchase.
 - Rusty said that if we could have access to Snyder Ave. we would be interested in having access to the back of the properties if the developers only wanted the fronts.
 - Kersten asked if we have ever considered getting a right of first refusal. Are there some properties that would be worth it? Stock thought that securing a right of first refusal costs money, but we would need to find out if that costs money/what goes into it and whether it would be worth it to put on certain properties
- Dixon
 - Stock gave Rusty the contact numbers and Rusty will follow up. The last appraisal that we have was done in 2016 and it wasn't enough at the time.
- Doherty
 - John will reach out to the contact
- Piazza

- Michelle will try to read the EPA restrictions report that they sent to the Township a while ago. The property is probably more usable than we think it is.
- Benyo/Kolb
 - Stock would like to go back to the properties in the northern part of the Township. It's been four years since Stock talked to Benyo or Kolb. Those properties would be great to secure as they are all contiguous and would be a great open space spread.
 - At the time Bentley was largely disagreeable, but if we got some other properties he may consider it. Rusty could reach out to Marcus on Facebook.
- We will discuss the next 5 priority properties at the next meeting so committee members will consider their options and come ready to discuss at the next meeting.

3. Drop Box

- Michelle has created an Open Space Drop Box, but she will try to make the files will be view only so only Michelle can edit. Michelle will look into editable vs non-editable files in Dropbox.

Public Comment

None.

Meeting was closed at 8:25.