

**East Pikeland Township
Open Space Committee**

**Meeting Minutes
May 21, 2019**

Meeting called to order at 6:33pm.

Present: Rusty Strauss, Stock Illoway, Lori Beck, Betsy Burns, John Schott, Patrick Jennings, Emily Gorge, Lori Howell, & Margaret Hodgkiss-Lilly

Absent:

Guests: Jonathan Gayl & Ron Graham

Staff: Michelle Rubin

Minutes from the April meeting were approved with no changes.

Michelle reported that the open space fund is \$370,090.15.

New Business

1. Official Welcome of New Members
 - o Introductions of all Open Space Committee Members were made.

2. Crouse Settlement
 - The Crouse property was officially purchased on May 14 at 2pm for \$5.2M.
 - o The money came out of the Open Space Fund. The Fund will be supplemented by a grant from Chester County for \$1.2M. A grant for \$1.5M from DCNR has also been submitted.
 - o A Schuylkill Highlands Grant has also been submitted to finance a consultant who will run community meetings and create a master park plan as the result. The Park and Recreation Board will now oversee next steps for the property.
 - Michelle reported that a survey of the property was completed. There is a pipeline that runs through the property and some other property line issues the Township will be working on.
 - There will be corn planted on the property this year. Stock encouraged the Township to consider transitioning to organic farming practices for both Crouse and Graham properties. Michelle mentioned that this could be laid out in a Township Sustainability Plan as well, which the EAC will work on.
 - Michelle informed the Committee that there will be a gathering held at the property either this spring or fall and she will share more information as that becomes available.
 - Other discussion included: sending a letter to neighbors & a naming contest for the future park

3. Chester County Open Space Summit Report
 - Rusty reported that the Summit was a great, educational event which celebrated Chester County being a leader in Open Space and also discussed the new return on the environment report that was recently completed. The report discusses the value of open space vs the cost of developing the land.
 - Michelle will send the Return on the Environment video to the Committee.

4. PA Land Conservation Conference Summary
 - May 16-18 Michelle attended the PA Land Conservation Conference in the Poconos. She attended sessions about conservation easements and land protection documents led by Pat Pregmon, as well as an informative session on building community partnerships.

- Substantive Review

- Michelle shared an idea that she learned about during the conference where land trust agencies have policies that allow them to have a second appraiser review an appraisal that has been completed to ensure that they agree professionally with the findings. The committee could consider something similar as they have had trouble in the past with appraisals being too low or too high.

5. Benyo

- Mr. Benyo owns large amounts of land in the northern part of the Township. The Committee would like to see those parcels protected via conservation easement. Stock has reached out and left a message but he hasn't heard back.
 - Margaret added that the County sends letters out to people who are eligible for the county's ag program as well.

Old Business

1. Brief Property Updates

- Kolb
 - Stock has talked with Marcus and now he's just waiting to hear back about his decision.
- Graham
 - The Board of Supervisors approved a conservation easement on the property
 - The Park and Recreation Board will meet with Pam Brown from French and Pickering Creeks Conservation Trust on June 11 about easement specifics.
 - Stocked asked about the Phase 2 Environmental Study. Michelle reported that the Board of Supervisors has decided not to move forward with it at this time.
- Davis
 - John reported that he talked with the Davises as well as the developer. They are both aware that the Township would like a buffer zone around the park and KYAL fields. The plan for development is not moving forward at this time due to lack of sewer, but both are aware of the Township's request.
- Steimer
 - No updates.
- Dixon
 - No updates.
- Hart
 - There is a new property owner, but they are based out of California. A letter has been sent. Lori H. offered to reach out to the listing agent for contact information.
- Massaro
 - This property along the French Creek was one of the first easements the Township did. It currently has a conservation easement and a trail easement on it. The property has now gone up for sale due to foreclosure. French and Pickering Creeks Conservation Trust has reached out to the Bank to let them know there's an easement on the land. The Township will continue to monitor and reach out to new owners when that information becomes available. There is no interest in purchasing the land due to the number of buildings on site.

Public Comment

- Ron introduced himself to new committee members and shared his views on the importance of preserving open space in the township.

Adjourned at 7:35pm.