

**East Pikeland Township
Open Space Committee**

**Meeting Minutes
April 16, 2019**

Meeting called to order at 7:03pm.

Present: Rusty Strauss, Stock Illoway, Lori Beck, Betsy Burns

Absent: John Schott

Guests: Jonathan Gayl, Patrick Jennings, Emily Gorge, Lori Howell, & Margaret Hodgkiss-Lilly

Staff: Michelle Rubin

Minutes from the January meeting were approved with no changes.

Michelle reported that the open space fund is \$5.56M.

New Business

1. Northern Federation Open Space Meeting Summary
 - Stock reported that he gave a presentation about the Declaration of Public Trust and other ideas for preserving land. A report was given about the state of open space in various Townships, East Pikeland falls somewhere in the middle.
 - The Committee discussed setting a percentage goal, there is currently 21% of Township acreage protected. It's tough to set a goal because a lot of it is out of the committee's hands in the end. Stock suggested having a goal about how many property owners the committee talks with. Will revisit.
2. Reimbursement Resolution Discussion
 - Michelle read an email from Michael Wolf, who presented to the committee in the fall about taking out a Bond in order to purchase Open Space in case the Open Space fund was used up over a large purchase. Michael suggested that if the Township is interested in pursuing a bond that they adopt a reimbursement resolution, a non-binding, free document that would help pave the way for the township to be able to take out a bond.
 - The Committee decided that it's not necessary at this time because the Township won't be using all of the Open Space fund and what money we do use will be replaced before we need a large amount again.
 - Michelle will put the sample resolutions in the DropBox for future use.
3. Chester County Open Space Summit
 - The Summit will take place on Thursday, May 2 from 5-7pm at the Lenfest Center at ChesLen Preserve, 1199 Cannery Rd. Coatesville.
 - The event will celebrate the 30th anniversary of Chester County's open space preservation program and the results of a study highlighting the benefits of open space preservation will be announced.
4. Hart Property
 - Michelle reported that the Hart Property, which is 4 acres along the French Creek, was sold, but the property transfer hasn't come in yet with the new owner's contact information. Once that information is available, she will reach out to determine their interest in talking with the committee.
5. Gus Meyer Property
 - The committee discussed the property and determined that they are not interested in purchasing it at this time as it is not contiguous to any other accessible open space.

Old Business

1. Strategic Planning Meeting Summary

- Members present reported the Committee's 2018 accomplishments and 2019 goals and enjoyed the opportunity to hear what other committees were working on and learn of potential partnerships.

2. Brief Property Updates

- Crouse
 - The Township has agreed to purchase the property for close to \$5.2M. The sale hasn't gone through officially yet, but it will be reported to the Committee once it does.
 - A grant to offset the purchase price has been awarded by the Chester County open space program for \$1.2M. A DCNR grant for \$1.5M has also been submitted.
 - Michelle confirmed that once the sale is final the Township will host a small program acknowledging the purchase, she will keep the Committee informed.
- Kolb
 - Stock met with Marcus and reviewed the appraisal and discussed options. They will meet again and Stock will take a sample easement and contract.
 - Michelle talked with Dan Balmer, Marcus's brother-in-law about his appraisal and his options. He will reach out if he has more questions.
- Graham
 - The Board of Supervisors asked the Committee for an official recommendation on what level of preservation the committee suggests.
 - Discussion was held about the pros and cons of a conservation easement vs Declaration of Public Trust option 3 which includes a conservation easement.
 - A motion was made by Stock to recommend that the Township pursue a full conservation easement with a conservation organization. Motion seconded by Lori. Passed unanimously.
- Davis
 - No updates.
- Steimer
 - No updates.
- Dixon
 - No updates. Rusty will reach out.

Public Comment

- The committee discussed the benefit of getting fly-over drone pictures of some of the open space properties in the northern section of the Township, especially Crouse. Margaret shared that she is a certified drone pilot by the County.
- Stock made a motion to appoint Lori Howell, Emily Gorge, Patrick Jennings, and Margaret Hodgkiss-Lilly to the four vacancies on the Open Space Committee. Motion seconded by Lori. Passed unanimously. The recommendation will be sent to the Board of Supervisors and approved at the May meeting.
- The next meeting date is also a Primary Election Day. The meeting will still be held on May 21, but it will be moved to 6:30pm and be held in the kitchen at the Township Building.

Adjourned at 8:40pm.