

# West Pikeland Land Trust

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West Pikeland Land Trust

## MEETING MINUTES

JULY 28, 2008

Attendance:    Jim Rowan            Ann Orth            Sean O'Neill  
                      Suzanne Kaplan    Tom Williams      Curt Grogan  
                      Melinda Mercurio   Mike Groman      Teresa Wood

Lisa Lacroix, Eileen Juico (visitors)

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### 1. Minutes of Meeting

Minutes of previous Board of Directors Meeting June 23, 2008 were reviewed and unanimously approved with corrections by Ann and Teresa.

### 2. Financial Report

Teresa indicated that the complete financials, including NLT account reconciliation would be presented in September in accordance with the quarterly schedule.

### 3. Committee Reports

**Open Space:** Curt advised that the Conservation Priority Mapping, criteria, etc. was approved by the BOS at the June meeting. Sean requested a copy of the Executive Summary and documents presented at the meeting and Curt agreed to email to the group. Curt also advised that the approved documents had not been submitted to the school district and adjoining municipalities by the Township as part of the 45 day review process, but after following up on this, it was subsequently done and he confirmed that the 45 day comment period ends August 28 which should allow this to be finalized and voted on by the BOS at the September meeting.

**Trails:** Lisa Lacroix advised that the Pickering Trail had been cleared by the Township. The Pickering Creek Bridge will now be widened from six to eight feet and 2000lb capacity per the Township Engineer. The revised design would be submitted to DEP and approval should take 30 days. Lisa also reported that her committee had slowed down trail mapping of Pine Creek Park until current controversy over usage has been resolved. In conversation, all present agreed that WPLT has standing, based upon its' stated mission, to be consulted and render an opinion on the land use of Pine Creek Park. Ann Orth motioned that WPLT write a letter to the BOS in support of current Master Planning for Pine Creek Park and following Master Planning techniques and process for any contemplated change in land use from previously approved plans. Melinda seconded the motion and all voted in favor. Suzanne agreed to draft letter for Jim's signature.

Lisa inquired about the Northern Federation of Chester County Committee and whether or not WPLT was or should become a member. This recommendation was previously disregarded by the Township who felt that our priorities were more aligned with Downingtown. It was agreed that it would be ok for Lisa to attend a meeting and report back to WPLT about potential benefits of this organization.

**Communication:** Melinda advised that the WPLT website was still under construction but was up and running. Melinda indicated that the completion of the website was her top priority and hoped to complete the website in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter and coordinate this announcement with the annual report and membership campaign later this year.

**Monitoring and Stewardship:** Tom Williams reported that there were no monitoring activities this past month. Tom had finally received a complete inventory of township owned property and copies of any conservation easements on Township owned property. Curt Grogan requested that he email him a copy.

**Development & Grants:** Ann Orth advised that she was in communication with Floyd Casey regarding the grant for the Land Management Plan for township owned properties. In speaking with others, it was suggested that the control of invasive species might be a more immediate concern than the timber harvesting program initially discussed. It was agreed that control of invasive species should be addressed in the plan, but the long term benefits of the timber harvesting program should not be overlooked. She would speak with him about addressing both in the plan.

**Education:** Mike Groman indicated that he was thinking about an educational event in October with guest speaker(s) entitled History of Land Use in West Pikeland Township. He suggested Binky Lee as a possible venue and Darrin Groff could lead some naturalist tours. He would provide more details at the next meeting.

**Strategic Planning:** Suzanne again requested that any nominations for Board memberships be forwarded to her. Suzanne also indicated that she will begin preparing quarterly report from WPLT to the BOS next month and requested that all committee members forward quarterly reports of their committee activities ASAP.

**Governance and Compliance:** Sean again reviewed the latest draft of the proposed revisions to the existing Operating agreement between WPLT and the Township. Jim Rowan acknowledged that under the terms of this Agreement WPLT operates like any other township committee which must present and approve an operating budget. Sean had reviewed the Ordinance for any gaps in indemnification language that should be tightened up with the new WPLT role. It was agreed to add language that indicated WPLT was and will remain a 501C3 non-profit Organization. Subject to the minor revisions noted, Tom Williams motioned to approve the revised agreement. Mike Groman seconded and the motion passed unanimously. Sean will make minor revisions and email final copy which will be submitted to the Township for consideration at the September meeting.

**General & Administrative:** Jim Rowan reiterated that Committee chairs should be working on budgets for next year and should submit on forms available from Teresa. Jim indicated that Melinda would be scheduling an introductory meeting with Lisa to better introduce her to WPLT. Any Board members available were encouraged to attend. She requested copies of the new WPLT Board package for potential new board members.

**4. Brenner Easement Discussion.**

Mike Groman initiated the discussion regarding the Brenner Easement. As a prospective buyer, he was interested to learn about the evolution of this Easement and possibly to serve as a lesson learned for future transactions, since most Directors were not on WPLT at the time this easement was granted. Eileen Juico reviewed the history of this transaction, which was initiated by the Brenners, presumably for financial reasons. The easement document included a façade easement, restricting renovations and expansions to the historic building and possibly deterring potential buyers. The property has been on the market for a long time and during the most recent monitoring inspection it was noted that the maintenance of the grounds and buildings seemed to be getting ahead of the Brenners, which may further devalue the property.

Mike also indicated that as a buyer, the basic infrastructure (well, septic system as well as underground fuel tank(s)) presented some potential liability. The question before the group was what, if anything WPLT could do to assist the Brenners and prevent this property from falling into further disrepair. Tom Williams agreed to contact the real estate broker for suggestions, as she would have a better handle on some obstacles mentioned by other potential buyers.

**The next regularly scheduled meeting will be on Monday, August 25, 2008 at 7:00 pm at the Township Building.**

Respectfully Submitted,  
Thomas L. Williams  
August 15, 2008