

Minutes of Meeting
West Pikeland Township Open Space Advisory Subcommittee
August 14, 2008

A regular meeting of the West Pikeland Township Open Space Advisory Subcommittee was convened on August 14, 2008, at the Township Building at 1645 Art School Road in Chester Springs, Pa.

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Jim Rowan, who chaired the meeting in Curt Grogan's absence. Other Subcommittee Members in attendance were Teresa Wood, Bob Haskell, Roberta Rometsch, Sean O'Neill and Ann Orth.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Jim Rowan called for approval of the minutes of the meeting held July 24th. Bob Haskell asked to clarify the minutes to include, in the discussion of the NALT proposal, his request for clarification of the "related expenses" which NALT mentions as a cost in addition to travel expenses. He also asked that we add the discussion of the question of whether we are billed by NALT for telephone and like consultation time.

Subject to these additions, Teresa Wood moved to approve the minutes for July 24th. The motion was seconded by Ann Orth and unanimously approved.

ADMINISTRATIVE UPDATE

Jim Rowan reported that the French and Pickering Trust representatives have indicated August 25th is the best date for them to meet with the West Pikeland Land Trust. He asked whether the Open Space Subcommittee would be willing to move the regular Subcommittee meeting date to coincide with this meeting with the Land Trust. Following discussion, the August 28th meeting of the Subcommittee was changed to August 25th, starting at 7:00 P.M., to coincide with the Land Trust meeting date and the planned meeting with the French and Pickering Trust representatives. Jim will arrange for advertising for this as a special meeting.

PERSONS WISHING TO BE HEARD (CONTI-DAVIS SUBDIVISION)

Present were Pamela Conti and her attorney, Ryan Costello. Mr. Costello explained that Pamela Conti and her husband Paul Davis wished to gauge the Township's interest in acquiring a conservation easement on part of their property. The property is 12.370 acres on the west side of Route 113 across from its intersection with Clover Mill Road. There is an existing parcel line dividing the property. The tract contains one existing home and one detached garage.

Sean O'Neill explained that Ms. Conti and her husband have a pending plan to divide the tract into 3 parcels, with one added home next to the existing one on Route 113 and a third larger lot to the north and rear of the tract. At the most recent Planning Commission meeting, Ms. Conti and Mr. Davis proposed eliminating the third lot and creating a larger second lot with the proposed new home to the rear of the tract. The Planning Commission questioned the applicants about further subdivision. This led to a discussion about the possibility of the proposed conservation easement and the present inquiry by the Conti-Davis's.

Mr. Costello indicated that, according to a memorandum from the Brandywine Conservancy, up to 6 lots might theoretically be created from the 12 acres. At present the 3 lot subdivision plan remains pending, but the Applicants are exploring this move to 2 lots as an alternative.

There was a discussion about the Conti-Davis' willingness to include a trail easement across the frontage of the tract to allow for connection to the planned trail to the south per the Comprehensive Plan. There was also discussion, and consensus, about the need to locate the new home, as proposed, to the rear of the tract and beyond the wooded area to preserve the open area along the Route 113 frontage. In addition, there was discussion about the desirability of creating restriction against tree removal in the area of the woods in the center of the tract.

Jim Rowan, in response to Mr. Costello's question, explained the general timeline and present status of the Township's easement program, and the screening criteria, as well as the steps remaining to be taken to finalize the program.

Teresa Wood strongly recommends that landowners consult with their own financial advisor when considering a conservation easement sale or donation.

Ted Gacomis and Jim Rowan indicated that they believe the conservation easement is worthy of further consideration here.

Jim Rowan will call Curt Grogan on his return to the area on August 19 and explore a possible site visit to the property.

Ted Roberts, of Art School Road, asked questions about the conservation easement process and the respective roles of the Planning Commission and the Open Space Subcommittee on projects such as the Conti-Davis subdivision. These questions were addressed by Mr. Rowan and the members.

Pamela Conti indicated that they are going away at the end of August, but did not object to the Subcommittee members visiting the property in their absence.

Following the discussion about the Conti-Davis property, Ann Orth commented that the Subcommittee should have a packet of materials to present to interested landowners and the Subcommittee discussed the status of those materials presently pending approval by the Supervisors, including the mapping and the summary letter to landowners. .

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS UPDATE/ CONTINUATION OF ADMINSTRATIVE MATTERS

Jim Rowan reported that the West Pikeland Land Trust has accepted the Subcommittee's recommendation that the Township should fund the costs of appraisals and Jim has asked Jeri Diesinger to develop a purchase order document for such appraisals. He also reported that the Land Trust and the Supervisors have approved the recommendation that the determination of the need for yield analyses be approached on a case by case basis.

Ann Orth questioned whether the yield analysis can be handled by the appraiser. Ted Gacomis indicated that appraisers do not generally do these since it's beyond their expertise, so that if we do not arrange for the yield analysis, when needed, the appraiser would just subcontract that aspect. Jim Rowan stated that the Township would be better served to control the yield analysis preparation and select who does it, so that we can be better assured of a trusted source, than to defer to the appraiser's selection of subcontractor to do it.

Jim Rowan reported that the period for comment by outside agencies on the priorities mapping materials and Comp. Plan Update ends on August 28, 2008, and that the Supervisors to conduct the public hearing to adopt these at their September meeting.

Ann Orth proposed that the Subcommittee adopt a standardized format to analyze project costs, so that the Subcommittee, Land Trust and Supervisors can more easily compare proposals

from different sources, such as the F&P, NALT, NLT, and Brandywine Conservancy. Ann distributed her initial draft of such a proposal comparison chart. Ann's idea was well received by the members. After discussion of her draft document, Jim Rowan suggested all members review it further and provide feedback on it so that it can be revisited at the September meeting.

Following the Executive Session of the Subcommittee (below), Ann Orth questioned whether historic resources should be included in the open space mapping process. Sean O'Neill stated that, at the Planning Commission review of the mapping, NLT's representative had indicated that these are not part of the mapping criteria presently but could be added in if the Township wished. Roberta Rometsch stated that she is willing to work on creating a list of the known resources identified by the Historic Commission. She displayed an older existing map of such resources, which is currently being reviewed and updated as to the resources noted by the Historic Commission. Sean O'Neill indicated that there is a like mapping that is part of the existing Comprehensive Plan that should be considered as well. There was consensus that the inventory should distinguish Class I (national historic register properties) and Class II resources (other historic resources).

MISCELLANEOUS

Jim Rowan asked if there was interest in discussing any other matter not on the agenda.

Ted Roberts of Art School Road asked the Subcommittee how they go about setting their priorities for their work as a committee. After discussion he then asked whether this Subcommittee should undertake a study to identify sources and locations of stream pollution in the Township, particularly via the roads in the Township and the means to filter or control these pollutants at these major sources/locations. He proposed enlisting interested college students (e.g. from Drexel University) to do this work as part of their credits or programs of study.

Sean O'Neill suggested that this work may be a better topic of attention from the newly created Environmental Advisory Council and Jim Rowan suggested that Mr. Roberts may wish to attend their meetings and consider participation on or before that committee on this subject.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

The Chairman called for an executive session to resume discussion of the proposal by NALT to work with the Township to secure easements on certain properties in the Township.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, on motion by Bob Haskell, seconded by Ted Gacomis all, the Committee unanimously resolved to adjourn the meeting at 7:50 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Sean O'Neill
Sean O'Neill, Secretary

ADDENDUM: See Executive Session Notes Addendum

