NORTH WHITEHALL TOWNSHIP

FARMLAND & OPEN SPACE PRESERVATION COMMITTEE MEETING

April 9, 2026

Convened: 7:00 pm Adjourned: 8:02 pm

In Attendance:		**Absent:**
Dennis Klusaritz-Supervisor	Al Geosits -Supervisor	Randy Cope -Township Manager
Mike Kukitz - Director of Grants, Preservation & Trails	Rich Semmel - Supervisor	
Mark Yatcilla	Heather Skorinko	
Bob Korp	Paul Semmel	
Marlene Stofflet	Susan Williams	

Dennis Klusaritz, Supervisor, called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm with the Pledge of Allegiance and a moment of silence.

MEETING Agenda:

1. **Approval of February 12, 2026 Meeting Minutes:**
    a. Motion was made by Paul Semmel to accept the minutes, seconded by Bob Korp. Motion passed unanimously.

2. **Old Business:**
    a. Current Preservation Update
        - It was noted that the Stewart property is now preserved.
        - The Skorinko #1 & #2 properties are next in line to be preserved.
        - Other residents who are interested and spoke with Mike recently:
            1. Lamar & Carolyn Brodhead on Ledger Road.
            2. Lloyd Kuhns on Cobbler Road – no paperwork submitted.
            3. Gogel Family on Clearview and Mulberry Road (orchard) - no paperwork submitted.
            4. Dennis & Barbara Stangle - no paperwork submitted.
            5. Bonnie Yenser on High Hill Road – Bonnie has called the township and spoke to Mike numerous times to voice her displeasure with the slow timeline of the preservation process. Unfortunately, her property does not qualify for county funding assistance, but she is on the townships list of potential future properties to preserve.

6. The Copeechan Fish & Game Club requested forms from the township to begin the preservation process. If preservation of this property is pursued, there will not be county or state assistance as it does not qualify for those programs.

b. Earned Income Tax (EIT)
   - BOS Approval
     1. Discussed needing revisions to the initially reported EIT rate and amount of potential revenue generated.
     2. Motion was made by Heather Skorinko to recommend a .15% EIT rate to the Board of Supervisors and seconded by Bob Korp. Motion passed unanimously.
     3. Dennis Klusaritz noted that it is important to preserve the farmer in addition to preserving the farm.
        a. Suggested offering educational workshops for the younger farmers.
        b. Offer retirement plans somehow.

c. Educational Video
   - Filming will begin at the end of this month by Turnstone Media
     1. Video will be about 3 minutes long.
     2. The video should be in full usage by this summer.
   - Paul Semmel suggested having a public educational meeting for community members. Mike mentioned this could possibly be incorporated into a township open house.
   - Other Advertising
     1. Ironton Rail Trail signs, newsletter, website, etc.

d. FAQ's
   - Mike sent the EIT Frequently Asked Questions information to the media company to reference while producing the videos.

Rich Semmel suggested changing our meeting time to 6:00 pm instead of 7:00 pm. The change would need to be advertised starting in 2027. Bob Korp made the motion to change the time to 6:00pm starting next year and Mark Yatcilla seconded it. Motion passed unanimously.

3. New Business:

a. Robert & Diane Schmidt Property
   - Schmidt Property is a total of 13 acres with most of it in Washington Township and 2.80 acres in North Whitehall Township.
   - North Whitehall will contribute $3,472 for two+ acres which includes the house, PA Commonwealth will contribute $80,001 and the county will contribute $999.04.

- After extensive discussion, a motion to proceed with preserving this property was made by Bob Korp and seconded by Heather Skorinko. Motion passed unanimously.

4. **Comments from the Floor:**
    a. Bob Korp suggested asking the county for information/resources on how to get programs started to support young farmers who are interested in learning more.
    b. Mike reported that a local schoolteacher reached out and is in discussions with the townships Recreation and Communications Coordinator about possibly starting a summer program related to nature, the outdoors, and farming.
    c. Dennis suggested creating an area in the township reserved for garden plots.

5. **Motion to Adjourn:**
    a. Motion was made by Heather Skorinko to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Bob Korp. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Marlene Stofflet, Secretary

THE NEXT FARMLAND OPEN SPACE PRESERVATION COMMITTEE MEETING

SCHEDULED FOR July 9, 2026