FARMLAND & OPEN SPACE PRESERVATION COMMITTEE
NORTH WHITEHALL TOWNSHIP
July 11, 2024 MEETING MINUTES

Township Supervisor Dennis Klusaritz called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance and a moment of silence. In attendance were Supervisor Dennis Klusaritz, Supervisor Al Geosits, Township Manager Randy Cope, Director of Grants, Preservation, and Trails Mike Kukitz, and members Heather Skorinko, Marlene Stofflet, Paul Semmel, and Bob Korp.

Discussion

A motion was made by Paul Semmel, seconded by Marlene Stofflet, to approve the April 11, 2024 Farmland Preservation/Open Space Committee meeting minutes. The motion passed unanimously.

Ag Security Map Update - 7 Year Review:

Director of Grants, Preservation, and Trails Mike Kukitz gave committee members an overview of updates that are being made to the Township's Ag Security Areas (ASA) Map. Mr. Kukitz has been working with Donna Wright of Lehigh County to complete a 7-year review of all properties currently in the Township's Ag Security program. He updated the committee on the progress he's made and provided the information for ASA properties that need to be removed. Committee members asked Mr. Kukitz to complete additional assessment on the Richard & Dawn Bausch Jr. property and Carolyn George property and to leave them in the ASA. Paul Semmel made a motion to remove all properties presented with the exception of the Richard & Dawn Bausch Jr. property and Carolyn George property. Motion was seconded by Bob Korp, the motion passed unanimously.

Preservation Status & Funding Update:

Director of Grants, Preservation, and Trails Mike Kukitz gave committee members an overview of the townships current preserved properties as well as a future outlook of properties to be preserved in 2024, properties to be preserved in 2025, and properties that could potentially be preserved 'out of order' in the future. He stated that we have a backlog of properties seeking preservation and that many of them are currently not ranked high enough on the Lehigh County preservation list to receive full county funding in 2024/2025. Supervisor Klusaritz made a motion, 2nd by Paul Semmel to have Mr. Kukitz contact the Wildlands Conservancy to see if they would be interested in obtaining a conservation easement for the Peischler property. The motion passed unanimously. Heather Skorinko made a motion, 2nd by Marlene Stofflet to have Mr. Kukitz contact the Wildlands Conservancy to see if they would be interested in obtaining a conservation easement for the Johnson property. The motion passed unanimously. A member of the public asked if the committee would consider a Go Fund Me page to try to acquire the additional funds needed to preserve all properties. Mr. Cope stated that the township would need to look into this to ensure that this is permissible for a township to do.

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Open Space Action Plan RFP:

Director of Grants, Preservation and Trails Mike Kukitz provided an update on the Open Space Action Plan. He explained that staff had interviewed two firms and would be bringing a recommendation to the Board of Supervisors at their August 5, 2024 meeting. Mr. Kukitz stated that a special kick-off meeting with the consultant and the Farmland & Open Space Preservation Committee may take place in September.

The next Farmland Preservation/Open Space Committee Meeting is scheduled for October 10, 2024, at 7:00 pm.

A motion was made to adjourn by Bob Korp, seconded by Heather Skorinko. The motion passed unanimously.

Meeting Adjourned – 8:25 PM
Mike Kukitz
Director of Grants, Preservation, & Trails

*This meeting was held at the Neffs Volunteer Fire Company - 3755 Park Ave, Neffs, PA 18065

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