

Richland Township Preservation Board Meeting Minutes

February 13, 2013

Submitted by Joe Geib

Members Present

In attendance were Kathy Fedorocsko, Dale Henninger, Doug Godshall, Joe Geib & Rich Sadler. Staff members present were Neil Erkert, and Laura Baird and Erin Hockensmith from Heritage Conservancy.

A. Minutes

The approval of the minutes for the December meeting was tabled, due to corrections that needed to be made. The minutes for the January meeting are not yet complete. Both meetings' minutes should be completed by the March meeting.

B. Financial Report

As requested, below is a listing of all the funds and allocations as of February 11, 2013.

Please note that the refunds the Township receives from the BCMOSP for those projects cannot be put back into the original bond fund; they are put into their own separate CD funds, but still counted in the total available funds.

Richland Township Open Space Funds

Feb-13

Original Bond	\$ 323,729.66				
BCMOSP Refund I	\$ 201,962.71				
BCMOSP Refund II	\$ 121,378.24	THP Contrib.	\$ 245,309.76		
Subtotal	\$ 647,070.61	Bond Total	\$ 892,380.37		
		Devery I		Casey	
		Cost	Remaining	Cost	Remaining
Bond Fund	\$ 892,380.37	\$ 79,625.00	\$ 812,755.37	\$ 112,846.00	\$ 699,909.37
BCMOSP Fund	\$ 270,029.00	\$ 238,875.00	\$ 31,154.00	\$ 31,154.00	\$ -
		T \$ 318,500.00		T \$ 144,000.00	

C. Property Reports: Active

1. Dolores Devery (36-29-07-01), Brian Devery (36-29-07-03): 49-1/2 acres, 992 Cherry Rd

The Deverys accepted offers of \$3,500/acre for the small parcel, and \$6,500/acre for the large parcel. The Board of Supervisors approved the purchase at the January 2 meeting, despite questions about the merit of preserving the smaller parcel. The proposal has been submitted to the Bucks County Open Space Board for final approval. Laura warned that the BCOS Board may require a smaller building envelope, due to the smaller lot size, and that the Township may be required to compensate the owner accordingly, but they also have the option to allow a "bargain sale" of the easement for \$3,500/acre, with the BCMOSP kicking in 75% of the cost. The presentation to the BCOS Board is scheduled for Feb. 27.

2. Ritti, Prudential Fox & Roach (36-17-33-2): 26 acres, Heller Road

The Township was contacted by Erin Lee from the Natural Lands Trust about purchasing this property. The property walk scheduled for January 25 was attended by Erin Lee, Kathy, Dale, Rich and Neil. Ed Ritti was present from Prudential. Due to the past use of the property and the fact that much trash and debris have been dumped there over the years, the Preservation Board wants a Phase I environmental study done, and possibly a Phase II. Natural Lands Trust said that a Phase I was no problem. There have been some discussions to subdivide the property to put houses on one end, and give the Township the other. The Board has some reservations about this plan, as we may be getting self-preserving land.

3. Robert Milner (36-29-63): 3+ acres on Union Road

There have been some delays with the abstract company, so settlement has not occurred yet.

4. Brad Gruver (36-9-87 & 88): 38 acres, Gross Road

First appraisal from Indian Valley came in at \$5000/acre: second appraisal From Orbacher \$8000/acre. Mr. Gruver accepted the first appraisal. We planned to apply for BCMOSP funding for this easement purchase but they disapprove of such a wide spread in appraisals: their valuation formula would give Mr. Gruver \$5500/acre. Neil presented Mr. Gruver with the \$5500 offer: he turned it down; He wants to review the low appraisal, and also wants closer to \$8,000/acre. Orbacher will go over some sections of the appraisal with Neil to show how he came up with his number. Based on the upcoming approval of the Devery and Casey properties, there is no more BCMOSP money remaining to fund this project.

5. Keller (36-9-6, 36-9-115-2): 88 acres, Gross Rd

No Change. Mr. Keller announced that he has decided not to preserve his property & intends to develop it. Kathy & Laura will make one last appeal, as 57 acres of the property (approx. half) may still qualify for Bucks County's Natural Areas Preservation Program.

6. Jim and Eileen Casey (36-29-73-01): 20.53 acres, Union Road

First appraisal came in at \$8,500/acre (*please note the correction from previous reports*). There is a horse riding ring on the property whose surface's perviousness is unknown & the ring is not close enough to the house to include it in the 2 acre exception area. It will probably be included in the easement area. We need to schedule the second appraisal. Heritage Conservancy received approx. \$50k from the 1772 Foundation to help preserve some farmland. Laura will work to see if some of these funds can be applied to this project.

D. Property Reports: Pending Contact / Action

7. Harry Kahn (36-39-83-1) and William and Catharine Longacre) 25 total acres including Wayne Snyder (36-39-83) on Rockhill Rd

He has gotten some of his neighbors to submit applications for preservation. Unfortunately, these parcels are also smaller in size, and preservation may not make economic sense for the Township to pursue.

New Business

A. Heritage Conservancy

Laura Baird brought Erin Hockensmith to the meeting and introduced her to the Board. She will be doing the remaining baseline surveys.

Schuylkill River Watershed Restoration Fund Grants

Laura mentioned that the SRWRF has small grants available for \$4,000 of associated project costs for projects that lie within the Schuylkill River Watershed. This limits the projects to be in the Unami Creek Watershed of Richland Township.

1772 Foundation

Heritage Conservancy received \$20,000 from 1772 Foundation to use on project costs. During this initial round, Heritage must spend all the money by April 2013 in order to keep receiving allocations from 1772. Laura suggested that the Devery and Casey projects can qualify for funding under this program. Heritage has the discretion to either loan or give these funds to certain projects. Laura offered that Heritage loan the funds for these projects to Richland Township, in order to offer some liquidity to the Township, as well as give Heritage some allocations toward their April 2013 spending deadline.

PPL Property

Heritage Conservancy is speaking with PPL regarding the Manilla property on California Road. PPL purchased this rather sizeable tract of land to be used for their power line project. However, not all the land will be used for this project. The Preservation Board is looking to see if PPL is willing to donate the remaining acres of this parcel to the Township.

B. Baseline schedule on Township funded preserved properties

Erin Hockensmith will be doing the baselines. Letters have been sent to the four remaining properties, notifying them that we are coming soon to perform the baselines. Those properties include Burkey, Mann, Wood, and Fluck.

C. Hunting policy on Township owned preserved properties

Kathy e-mailed Steve Sechriest asking that the Romano tract be posted and try and deal with neighbors' concerns about hunting activity and long-term parking there.

Steve replied that Township workers don't have time to post the property, that property lines are sometimes not clearly defined in the open landscape on some properties, the Second Amendment allows for open carry of firearms, and that no party has requested nor been granted permission to hunt on the Township-owned section of the Romano tract.

D. Maintenance policy on Township owned preserved properties

Dale drafted a narrative and some ideas that we can propose to the Supervisors. These ideas need to be re-written and incorporated with some work Joe has done previously.

E. Preserved property signs - replacement, new

Neil will order the 20 signs, and also include No Dumping signs on the same post, to try and ensure that the vacant preserved properties do not become public dumping grounds.

F. Business Cards

Dale would like to get some business cards to the volunteers on the Preservation Board.

G. Ag Security Letters

Kathy sent letters to new prospects. She also requested a parcel list of those in the Ag security district to complement the map Neil updated. We received positive interest from Hermann, Landis, and Casey. Mr. Landgreen declined to be involved.

New Business

None

Motion to Adjourn- Joe motioned, Dale seconded, unanimous approval.

Next Meeting: Wednesday, March 13, 2013, 7:00 PM