

UPPER MT. BETHEL TOWNSHIP

387 Ye Olde Highway
Mount Bethel, PA 18343-5220

THE MINUTES OF A MEETING FOR THE UPPER MT. BETHEL TOWNSHIP OPEN SPACE ADVISORY BOARD TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 16, 2016

I. CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order at 7:30 PM by Judith Henckel, chairperson. Other members present: Michelle Arner, Janet Pearson and Kathleen Barnes. Barrett Transue was unable to attend. David Due, Township Supervisor, joined the meeting approximately 7:40 PM.

II. MINUTES: Janet moved to approve the minutes of January 19, 2016; second by Kathleen. All aye, motion passed.

III. Reports: Livable Landscapes-Open Space Plan for Northampton County is available in digital format. Judy noted there are some change at the County level for the Open Space Application review process. A technical review that is more aligned with DCNR Grant Protocol is in the works. February 26 will be a "Save it or Pave it" workshop with Maria Bentzoni. Several other programs are offered. The Liberty-Water Gap Trail group is making promotional efforts with more publicity.

V. PROJECT UPDATES:

County Update:

Albert Farm: Will move forward

Bocko & Poliskewitz are in discussion and appear to be moving forward.

Township Partnership funds will likely be utilized this year. Criteria such as development potential and quality of soils are critical in determination of easement value.

UMBT Update:

Janet noted the Reagle Farm, preserved previously and now under new ownership, has a vegetable wagon that is a welcome addition to the community.

Transue: An extension from the County is not needed and the preservation easement may be finalized soon.

Ribitzki: The Township has committed approximately \$15,000 for this fee simple purchase. The buildings are coming down, slowly.

Eastern Industries: There was considerable discussion about the process for the easement agreement with NLT (Natural Lands Trust). David noted the current Township insurance policy specifically excludes hunting. The Supervisors are continuing to discuss the future of this property. Janet noted any sale of the property would be subject to 10 years of roll back taxes. David clarified any sale would undergo a sealed bid process.

Current Zoning and possible future land use were discussed, including an easement for water and sewer. Past planning for sewer in the Township was reviewed; it was noted the Act 537 Plan update was not completed.

David noted the current Rails to Trails projects in the Slate Belt, including one in UMBT.

The members emphatically believe the preservation of this property, in the middle of the high priority Mt. Bethel Fens, is a clear choice.

Well planned development, including protection of important lands and over 55 communities were noted as desirable and integral in maintaining a quality of life for residents in UMBT.

VI. ADJOURN: 8:45 PM Kathleen motioned, Janet second.

NEXT MEETING: Possibly no meeting in March, then meet April 19, 2016.

Respectfully Submitted: Michelle Arner, Secretary