

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, SEPTEMBER 20, 2016

I. CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order at 7:05 PM by Judith Henckel, chairperson. Other members present: Michelle Arner, Kathleen Barnes and Janet Pearson. Barrett Transue was unable to attend. Rick Fisher, Township Manager, arrived about 7:30 PM.

II. MINUTES: Janet moved to approve the minutes of May 17, 2016; second by Kathleen. All aye, motion passed.

III. Reports: Judy reported progress associated with trails is very active.

IV. PROJECT UPDATES:

County Update:

Albert Farm: Some of the Township Partnership Funds have been used for this agricultural easement.

Bocko & Poliskewitz: The remaining Township Partnership funds will be utilized for these two farms. It is likely an additional \$200,000 will be requested from the Township for the Bocko easement.

All Township Partnership funds (\$712,000 total) will be utilized for the farmland easements this year. We are unsure if this Township Partnership program will continue in the future.

UMBT Update:

Two UMBT farms appear to qualify for County funding for next year.

There was some discussion about how much land was preserved in UMBT. It was estimated that about 2000 acres have been preserved, mostly through conservation easements. That includes farmland and natural areas.

Ribitzki: 26.8 acres is under agreement with TNC. The Township had previously committed \$15,000 for this fee simple purchase.

Several other property owners are working with TNC and the County for possible preservation.

Eastern Industries: The draft easement was completed in June 2016. The easement needs to be worked out with additional details. A workshop is planned. Several steps remain prior to settlement.

Judy reminded the members that NLT (Natural Lands Trust) completed a stewardship plan for this property and a Phase One Bog Turtle study was also completed in 2009.

Rick Fisher summarized the intent of the current management plan for materials storage.

The members have concerns with the progress for finalizing the easement and the distractions that are apparent.

The members strongly support moving ahead with the easement agreement and utilizing the land for passive recreation for the community. Kathleen stressed the proposal from NLT should be signed.

There was some discussion about the Natural Areas Inventory and acknowledgement much of the Township is significant natural area recognized by the state and the region. There was discussion about hiking, hunting and insurance.

V. ADJOURN: 8:30 PM Kathleen motioned, Janet second.

NEXT MEETING: To be determined

Respectfully Submitted: Michelle Arner, Secretary