

**WHITEMARSH TOWNSHIP
OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE MEETING
WHITEMARSH TOWNSHIP ADMINISTRATION BUILDING
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 22ND 2020**

1. CALL TO ORDER – 7:00PM

BIDDLE INDELICATO

KAUFMAN LANE MOULTON

BOS LIAISON: NESTER TOWNSHIP STAFF: BLOMSTROM
BENDER (MINUTES)

2. ANNOUNCEMENTS

- a. Deborah Lamb's term on the OSC expired 12/31/19. On January 14, 2020 Deborah e-mailed the members of the OSC to state that she was not asking to be re-appointed, thus leaving a second vacancy on the Committee. Steve Kaufman will send her a letter of thanks from the OSC for her service.
- b. Laura Boyle-Nester stated that there were 2 people up for consideration to join the Open Space Committee. She noted that one person would be considered at the next BOS meeting. She stated that the second person asked the BOS to hold off considering appointment until after the next OSC meeting (April 22nd).
- c. Chris Indelicato was not in attendance. He notified the OSC Liaison in advance and sent his regrets.
- d. Tom Blomstrom noted that Chris Lane was re-appointed to the OSC for another 3-year term.

3. RE-ORGANIZATION

- a. Chris Lane nomiNathand Stephen Kaufman as Chair, Hugh Moulton seconded, and Stephen Kaufman was selected unanimously.
- b. Hugh Moulton nomiNathand Chris Lane as Vice-Chair, Joan Biddle seconded, and Chris Lane was selected unanimously.

4. APPROVAL OF WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 23, 2019 MEETING MINUTES

- a. Chris Lane made a motion to approve the minutes, Hugh Moulton seconded. The minutes were approved unanimously.

5. 2020 OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE MEETING SCHEDULE

- a. A copy of the meeting schedule for 2020 was given to each member.

6. UPDATED OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE CONTACT LIST

- a. Tom Blomstrom distributed an updated list of members of the OSC, and noted he would update the list again with new members as they are appointed.

7. OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE – POWERS AND DUTIES IN ACCORDANCE WITH TOWNSHIP CODE

- a. A copy of the powers and duties was given to each member and Tom Blomstrom stated he would get a copy to the new member(s) when they are appointed.

8. OPEN SPACE FUNDING REPORT

- a. Nathan Crittendon, Director of Finance, gave an overview of the report, and highlighted the following:
 - i. 2019 was a record year in terms of interest earnings due to increasing rates and the Township shopping around for the best deal.
 - ii. Maintenance expenses were incurred with the Open Space Fund – Wells Street Open Space-Trail (Gambone Tract).
 - iii. OSC funds used to pay down a portion of debt attributable to the purchase of the Sheep Tract lowered interest and principal payments.
 - iv. Hugh Moulton asked about the transfer to the General Fund in 2010. Nathan Crittendon stated that there was one transfer to the General Fund in 2010 for \$765,000 to repay the initial start-up capital that was issued to Open Space in 2006. He also stated that the EIT was instituted in 2007. Chris Lane stated that he would like a footnote added to the Maintenance Reserve line item in the Open Space Funding Report stating that it can be used for Open Space purchases at the discretion of the Township. He requested it be noted anywhere in the document that the number is mentioned. Brief discusses were held as to possible language to be added at the direction of Township Administration. Stephen Kaufman added that if the current language is used, it appears as if the funds cannot be used to purchase properties. He asked Nathan Crittendon if language could also be added to the 2020 audit to this effect and drew attention to the memo distributed with the meeting materials suggesting wording. Nathan Crittendon stated the suggestions made by the Open Space Committee to amend future language used in both the prepared quarterly open space report, distributed to the Open Space Committee and the Management's Discussion and Analysis portion of the annual financial audit would be taken under advisement. Stephen Kaufman made a motion to request the Board of Supervisors authorize adding such language. Chris Lane seconded the motion and it passed unanimously. Stephen Kaufman was authorized to follow up with a letter to the Board of Supervisors. The Committee thanked Nathan Crittendon for his work and the increasing level of transparency.

- b. Documents from Stephen Kaufman

- i. Stephen Kaufman stated that there were discrepancies in the Sheep Tract purchase numbers as reported in various places in the Open Space Funding Report and audit.
 - 1. Nathan Crittendon stated that the actual purchase price was \$7.8 million and after the soft costs (closing, etc.) the total came to \$8.5 million. Stephen Kaufman thanked Nathan Crittendon for clearing this matter up.
- ii. Stephen Kaufman asked if there were any non-EIT dollars left in the Open Space Fund. Nathan Crittendon responded that all non-EIT dollars had been spent.
- c. Joan Biddle made a motion to accept the Finance report, Chris Lane seconded, the report was accepted unanimously.

9. WISSAHICKON VALLEY WATERSHED ASSOCIATION (WVWA) PRESENTATION

- a. Hugh Moulton gave a brief history of the WVWA and stated that there was potential for protection at the Highlands.
- b. Gale Farmer (Executive Director) and John Farro (Director of Conservation) gave a brief history of the work they have accomplished and what the WVWA organization does to protect open space. They stated that much of Whitemarsh Township falls within the Wissahickon Watershed along with 13 other municipalities. One of the WVWA's 3 focus areas is the Sheaff Lane area near Broad Axe. A discussion ensued about the parcels and potential development/protection areas including trail connections. The goal of a partnership between the Open Space Committee and WVWA is to preserve as much open land as possible, particularly in the watershed area.
- c. Tom Blomstrom requested that WVWA send out a copy of their presentation and thanked the WVWA for putting it together and coming to the meeting. The WVWA requested that their presentation be for internal use only and not be posted.

10. COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE MEMORADUM

- a. Chris Lane asked if there would be an opportunity to update the draft, as the Committee wants to ensure their comments are added properly.
- b. Tom Blomstrom stated that residents could comment at the Planning Commission considering the final draft. He stated he would notify the Committee when the final draft is posted.

11. UPDATE ON HIGHLANDS

- a. Tom Blomstrom stated that the Township Manager has heard from the State, and was told that the State was in the process of setting up a meeting with the Township leadership and The Highlands.
- b. Hugh Moulton stated that Nancy Moses (PHMC, Chair) visited The Highlands and has arranged for The Highlands to make a presentation to PHMC Board in March. It was suggested that The Highlands put together a business plan

including a list of goals and visions. He added that Joanna Walters was creating a business plan and will submit a copy to the Township when it is appropriate.

12. OPEN SPACE SUGGESTION (EMAILS) - PROCEDURE REVIEW-CRITERIA

- a. A copy of the Public Submission Procedure was given to each member.
- b. It was explained that the first level of review would be by the Township administration, to determine whether the property was already subject to restrictions (contracts, etc.) which would prohibit further consideration. If the recommended property otherwise seemed to meet the baseline criteria for an opportunity to be open space, it would be forwarded to the Open Space Committee for review.
- c. Stephen Kaufman stated that if the group decides to recommend the property to the BOS, that the submitter be notified. He also asked if under #2 of the procedure, the Open Space Committee still be notified of any action taken.
- d. Tom Blomstrom stated that he would add that to the procedure.
- e. Chris Lane made a motion to adopt the procedure, Joan Biddle seconded, and it was adopted unanimously.

13. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

- a. Debra Harris, Whitemarsh Township Resident, stated that while it's great that the Township is interested in buying large properties she would like the township to look into smaller properties to connect neighborhoods and parks.
 - i. A discussion ensued about smaller parcels turning into pocket parks in the Township.
- b. MJ Fisher, Whitemarsh Township Resident, stated that she was in attendance to see the committee in action.

14. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

- a. A discussion ensued about the Stenton/Militia Hill property. Laura Boyle-Nester stated that she would ask the Township Manager for an update. Joan Biddle stated that she was under the impression that the next step was a site survey with Township Engineer to see what the potential is. She added that the board should ask the Township Manager for an update and that this matter be added to the next agenda. OSC took no formal action on this but the Chair will place it on the next agenda.
- b. Laura Boyle-Nester later e-mailed the OSC that: "The home on Stenton and Militia Hill that has been discussed was bought recently. No proposed plans yet but Township staff get the indication they are not looking for any large residential plan."

15. ADJORNMENT

- a. Chris Lane made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Joan Biddle seconded; the meeting was adjourned at 8:47PM.