

**HALFMOON TOWNSHIP OPEN SPACE PRESERVATION BOARD
REORGANIZATION MEETING – MINUTES
FEBRUARY 23RD, 2011**

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Ron Hoover called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. Other members present were Bob Eberhart, Ben Pisoni, Jerry Brown, Jim Strauss and Andy Merritt. Staff present was Susan Steele, Manager and Amy Smith, Minute Recorder. No Audience present.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

3. ORGANIZATION OF THE OPEN SPACE PRESERVATION BOARD

a. Appointment of Chairman

● ***MOTION: Mr. Eberhart moved to appoint Mr. Hoover as the Chair; Mr. Merritt seconded; Mr. Hoover accepted; Mr. Brown moved to close the nominations; Mr. Pisoni seconded; Vote 6-0-0; Motion Carried.***

b. Appointment of Vice-Chair

● ***MOTION: Mr. Hoover moved to appoint Mr. Brown as Vice-Chair; Mr. Brown accepted; Mr. Pisoni moved to close the nominations; Mr. Merritt seconded; Vote 6-0-0; Motion Carried.***

4. RECORDING SECRETARY

● ***MOTION: Mr. Merritt moved to appoint Ms. Smith the recording secretary for the Open Space Preservation Program; Mr. Brown seconded; Vote 6-0-0; Motion Carried.***

5. MEETING SCHEDULE

● ***MOTION: Mr. Pisoni moved to approve the meeting dates of the first and third Wednesday of each month as listed on the agenda; Mr. Eberhart seconded; Vote 6-0-0; Motion Carried.***

6. MINUTES

● ***MOTION: Mr. Brown moved to approve the minutes of December 1st, 2010; Mr. Pisoni seconded; Vote 6-0-0; Motion Carried.***

7. CENTRE COUNTY FARMLAND TRUST

Mr. Eberhart stated he attended the Board of Supervisors meeting to discuss the tax incentives offered to residents that donate their properties to the Centre County Farmland Trust and requested staff forward a copy of the flyer to all Open Space Preservation Program members, post on the website and in an update. Mr. Eberhart explained the tax incentives will expire at the end of this year. Mr. Eberhart stated the tax incentives could be substantial. Mr. Eberhart explained that a farmer who earns more than 50% of their income off their farm can deduct the full amount off their income tax over 16 years. Mr. Eberhart stated he thought there may be applicants in the program that may be interested in donating

their permanent easement rights for the tax incentives and get out of the Township program. Mr. Eberhart stated the question is would it be legal to get out of the Township program and get into this program. Mr. Eberhart commented that Ms. Yurchak was going to look into the legality of this. Ms. Steele stated she had not heard back from Ms. Yurchak. Mr. Eberhart stated any advanced payments would have to be paid back to the Township. Mr. Brown stated he had 166 acres in Ferguson Township that he could put in the Farmland Trust program and still leave the portion in Halfmoon Township in the Township program but questioned whether that would be a conflict. Mr. Pisoni stated he did not see why that would be a conflict. Mr. Strauss stated Mr. Brown did not have anything to do with drafting the County Ordinance. There was discussion whether this was a tax credit or a deduction. Mr. Eberhart explained this was not a credit but a deduction for income tax. Mr. Eberhart stated there were 30 people signed up to attend the meeting and there are 7 properties in the land trust program but they are not prime Ag. ground.

8. OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Eberhart questioned the status of the Heim application. Ms. Smith explained the application is at the Solicitor's office and Ms. Yurchak is drafting the leases and Mr. Goodall is reviewing the deeds.

Mr. Eberhart commented Ms. Smith stated the 5 year review is completed and questioned the results. Mr. Hoover explained Ms. Steele is compiling notes to complete a report that will be provided to the Board of Supervisors. Ms. Steele stated she felt the Board of Supervisors would send it back to the Open Space Board for review and comments before taking any action.

Mr. Hoover stated Mr. Tylka is willing to serve as an alternate member to the Open Space Preservation Board or a possible replacement if necessary.

9. CITIZEN'S COMMENTS

There were no citizen's comments.

10. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 7:31 p.m.

- ***MOTION: Mr. Pisoni moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:31 p.m.; Mr. Merritt seconded; Vote 6-0-0; Motion Carried.***