

**HALFMOON TOWNSHIP OPEN SPACE PRESERVATION BOARD  
ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING-MINUTES  
JANUARY 13, 2021**

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Temporary Chair Lorin Nauman (present by Zoom) called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m. Other members present were Ron Hoover (present by Zoom), Jim Smith (present by Zoom), Christine Bracken-Piper (present by Zoom), Reed Moyer (present by Zoom) and Patti Hartle (present by Zoom). Staff present was Denise Gembusia, Township Manager (present by Zoom), Amy Smith, OSPB Administrator (present by Zoom), and Rebekah Laird, Recording Secretary (present by Zoom). No audience was present.

**2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**3. CITIZEN'S COMMENTS**

There were no citizen's comments.

**4. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN**

- *MOTION: Mr. Moyer moved to nominate Mr. Nauman as the Chair; Ms. Hartle seconded; Mr. Nauman accepted; Mr. Moyer moved to close the nominations; Ms. Hartle seconded; Mr. Moyer moved to appoint Mr. Nauman as the Chair; Ms. Hartle seconded; Vote 6-0-0; Motion carried.*

**5. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN**

- *MOTION: Mr. Nauman moved to nominate Mr. Moyer as the Vice-Chair; Mr. Hoover seconded; Mr. Moyer accepted; Mr. Nauman moved to close the nominations; Mr. Hoover seconded; Mr. Nauman moved to appoint Mr. Moyer as the Vice-Chair; Mr. Hoover seconded; Vote 6-0-0; Motion carried.*

**6. RECORDING SECRETARY**

- *MOTION: Mr. Hoover moved to appoint Ms. Laird as Recording Secretary; Mr. Moyer seconded; Vote 6-0-0; Motion carried.*

**7. MEETING SCHEDULE**

- *MOTION: Ms. Hartle moved to approve the following meeting dates for the OSPB for 2019 for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of each month at 6:00pm, as follows: February 10<sup>th</sup>, March 10<sup>th</sup>, April 14<sup>th</sup>, May 12<sup>th</sup>, June 9<sup>th</sup>, July 14<sup>th</sup>, August 11<sup>th</sup>, September 8<sup>th</sup>, October 13<sup>th</sup>,*

*November 10<sup>th</sup>, & December 8<sup>th</sup>; Mr. Moyer seconded; Vote 6-0-0; Motion carried.*

## 8. MINUTES

Mr. Moyer said that in line "Mr. Moyer suggested that a good place to start with goals would be to look at having 50% of preservable land in the township be permanently preserved" to change preservable to just "50% of land in the township."

- *MOTION: Mr. Hoover moved to approve the meeting minutes of November 4<sup>th</sup>, 2020 with stated correction as submitted; Mr. Nauman seconded; Vote 6-0-0; Motion carried.*

## 9. EVALUATION OF OPEN SPACE PROGRAM, INCLUDING OBJECTIVES AND EFFECTIVENESS

Ms. Gembusia had asked in the previous meeting that the board consider the following questions for discussion:

### 1. Define open space.

There were several definitions provided including the current definition listed in the Open Space Preservation Ordinance. There was discussion regarding using the Act 153 definition of open space and possibly also using it for outlines of public benefits. Ms. Gembusia stated that the board might want to look at expanding beyond a generic definition to possibly separating different types of open space (i.e., parkland). The board reviewed both the current open space definitions found in the Open Space Program Ordinance as well as the Zoning Ordinance both prior to 2020 and current. The board compared these definitions to ones found online with the purpose of finding consistency. The two definitions below were found to be close to what the vision for the program is and could be used as a guide or the wording could be modified to get the clear and consistent definition desired.

- Open space** includes natural areas such as forests and grasslands, as well as working farms, ranches, and timberlands. Open space also includes parks, stream and river corridors, and other natural areas within urban and suburban areas. Open space lands may be protected or unprotected, public, or private.
- Open space** is a parcel of land in a predominantly open and undeveloped condition that is suitable for any of the following: Natural areas, Wildlife and native plant habitat, Important wetlands or watershed lands, Stream corridors, Passive, low-impact activities, Little or no land disturbance, Historic and non-motorized trails.

There was then brief discussion on the use of terminology of open space vs. open land. Mr. Nauman stated for clarification he knows that the definition for

open space refers to land preserved under Act 153 and the definition for open land refers to the RPD requirements.

2. Determine public benefit.

Ms. Gembusia stated discussions on public benefit were not completed at the last meeting and the Board was still trying to determine how to quantify public benefit. Ms. Hartle asked if there might be an existing tool that could be modified or reviewed. There was discussion on whether there would be liability issues for private landowners to allow access to the public and if there was a way to re-define public benefit without public access. Mr. Moyer provided some suggestions on defining public benefit to review for the next meeting with some possible input.

3. What does the Township's financial position look like if we continue to offer advances and new leases? What does the same financial position look like if we offer permanent easements to property owners wish to transition into a permanent easement?

Ms. Gembusia reviewed a 100-year projection chart that was put together for budgeting purposes to show the benefit of pursuing permanent easements to help alleviate possible deficits in the breakdown for future lease payments. The board discussed different scenarios regarding the projections and how pursuing permanent easements could change some projected amounts.

4. Is this program, specifically, the mechanism in which we would like to preserve open space in the future? If so, what implications are there if nobody wants to enter the program moving forward? If not, what other options for open space preservation could the Township utilize?

Ms. Gembusia questioned whether the board would prefer to focus on permanent easements with no new leases. Mr. Moyer stated that he would prefer to have some exceptions in place on the eventuality a high interest property would become available for them to still be able offer a lease. Ms. Hartle stated that she also would not want to bar any new leases on that same possibility and that the board is more looking to shift their focus to permanent easements. Ms. Hartle further stated that this would allow them to still be open to acquire a new lease if interest is shown but they could be more particular on accepting the properties. There was brief discussion on steps to moving forward to shift their focus to permanent easement.

Ms. Gembusia summarized that for next meeting the board should review Mr. Moyer's points to define public benefit and provide input. Ms. Gembusia commented that the Board could also to use some of the maps provided as visual aid.

Mr. Smith left the meeting at 7:39 p.m.

## **10. UPDATE ON PERMANENT EASEMENT PURCHASE RESPONSES**

There were thirty (30) letters sent to applicants who currently have 99-year leases. Some applicants have more than one property in the 99-year lease program. Responses were due by close of day November 13, 2020. There were

eleven (11) responses received for consideration/non-consideration for a permanent easement:

**Interested**

Chad & Kacee Burke – 49.07 acres  
 David Piper & D. Christine Bracken-Piper – 26.83 acres  
 Joanne Fisher – 160.2125 acres  
 Joanne Fisher – 39.8375 acres  
 Daniel Dreibelbis & Barbara Spencer – 63.639 acres  
 Wilson Partnership – 222.6 acres  
 Ronald, Lawrence, David Hagg – 11.025 acres  
 Wolfgang Bruckner – 12.628 acres  
 Daniel & Claire Digman – 25.25 acres  
 John Heim – 76.78 acres  
 John Heim – 33.99 acres

**Total Acres: 721.862**

**Non- interested**

Lorin Nauman & Virginia Squier – 112 acres  
 John Brodzina – 103.05 acres

**Total Acres: 215.05**

**No Response**

D. Michael Barr – 184.05 acres  
 Steve & Susan Warner – 41.7 acres  
 Craig & Christa Sechler – 14.71 acres  
 Robert Rider – 61.6 acres  
 Andrew Boyce Lewis – 44.6 acres  
 Samuel & Evelyn Gray – 108 acres  
 Harpster Property – 10.5 acres  
 Harpster Property – 22.66 acres  
 Jillian Strayhorn – 13.711 acres  
 Barron & Lynn Stine – 132.3 acres  
 Barron & Lynn Stine – 20.8 acres  
 Corey & Emily Dillon – 36 acres  
 Bradley Barter – 106.25 acres  
 Gerald & Shirley Brown – 270 acres  
 Diane & David Snyder – 25.8 acres  
 Thomas Brodzina – 139.7 acres  
 Sandra Podgurski – 31.5 acres

**Total Acres: 1,263.881**

The board briefly discussed the next steps for working on rating and ranking interested properties. The board discussed finishing reviewing the public benefit portion of the scale for definition and then using resources available to discuss rating for each property and then ranking the properties for permanent easement

purchase. Ms. Smith suggested updating the map to include the interested landowners to give the Board a visual of where the properties are located.

#### 11. OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Nauman stated he would like an idea of what the new objectives will be for 2021. Ms. Gembusia suggested that Mr. Nauman provide a write-up of the work plan for the OSPB to review and approve. Ms. Gembusia stated the work plan should include defining the definitions, focusing on permanent preservation, and finalizing the permanent rating scale. Mr. Moyer agreed to help Mr. Nauman with the work plan.

Ms. Gembusia stated there was a second case of COVID exposure within the staff and the office is closed to the public so anyone needing assistance should call or email staff.

#### 12. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 7:55pm.

- ***MOTION: Mr. Moyer moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:55pm; Ms. Hartle seconded; Vote 5-0-0; Motion carried.***

Respectfully Submitted,



Rebekah Laird,  
OSPB Recording Secretary